

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

HARRY E. WOLFF, PUBLISHER, INC., 166 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK

No. 1261

NEW YORK, AUGUST 2, 1922

Price 7 Cents

LOST IN THE BLIZZARD;

OR, THE SNOW-BOUND SCHOOL BOYS

By HOWARD AUSTIN.
AND OTHER STORIES



He drew the revolver out of Mr. Worthington's hand, and took careful aim at the bear. Seeing Frank, the animal reared on his hind legs, and uttered a fierce growl. The ominous roar of the bear echoed through the school-room.

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Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Pub., Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, February 10, 1913, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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LOST IN THE BLIZZARD

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CHAPTER I.—A Dakota Schoolboy In Peril.

The farming community in a certain section of Bon Homme county, Dakota, was much troubled and put to serious loss one summer and fall by reason of the depredations of horse and cattle thieves. Finally, late in the season, when the first snows of winter lay upon the land everywhere in the far Northwest, the men of Miletown—a hamlet south of the Crow Creek Indian Agency in the valley of the Missouri—and the farms adjacent turned out and hunted down a number of the horse and cattle thieves. One Giles Arkhart, however, who was a somewhat mysterious character, with permanent residence nowhere; but who wandered hither and yon, was fortunate enough to elude the enraged farmers, although they entertained strong suspicions against him. In fact, the people were pretty well convinced that Giles Arkhart was a leading member of the gang of "stock runners," as horse and cattle thieves were locally designated.

Information was obtained that Giles Arkhart had fled the country. A teamster had seen him making north, and it appeared to those who set out to track him that he might have gone to the Indian reservations. At all events, Giles disappeared, and the very night before his departure Frank Overton lost a horse which he had reared from a colt, and to which he was much attached. The horse was stolen from Daddy Cuthbert's stable. Frank Overton was a Dakota schoolboy, his age nearly seventeen years, and he was as fine and manly a Western boy as one could wish to see. Frank had always been obliged to work for a livelihood, for he was an orphan whom Daddy Cuthbert had taken from the county poor-farm and adopted as his own son.

"Daddy" Cuthbert, as every one familiarly designated him, was a kind-hearted, childless old widower, and the owner of a small farm when Frank first came to live with him. But the old man met with misfortunes; his crops failed two years in succession, and then the "cattle disease" took off most of his stock. Misfortunes are said to seldom come singly, and so it was with Farmer Cuthbert, and about this time a bad cough he had been afflicted with for a long time developed into pulmonary consumption, and Frank's foster-father became a confirmed invalid. From that time most of the responsibility of the farm devolved on Frank, and the lad became more manly from the fact. He cheerfully assumed duties be-

yond his years, and labored diligently and well, but already Daddy Cuthbert had been compelled to mortgage his farm to raise money to buy stock and seed, and poor Frank found it impossible to pay off the mortgage, the proceeds of the farm being barely sufficient to give Daddy Cuthbert, Mother Rainford, an old woman who served as the housekeeper for Cuthbert, Zeb Cook, a colored farm-hand, and Frank himself a livelihood.

Our narrative opens in the month of January of the present year of grace A. D. 1898, and the mortgage which Daddy Cuthbert had placed upon his farm was now due. The document in question was held by one Luke Grindle, a farmer, well supplied with this world's goods and with money to lend, though there were those who said he would never lay up treasures in another world on account of the fact that he was a hard, grasping, merciless man in all his dealings, and a stranger to all sentiment of Christian charity. This was Luke Grindle's reputation, and in this case the man's real character was pretty well known. At the time we have selected for the opening of our story Daddy Cuthbert lay ill almost unto death in a small room on the second floor of his humble homestead in the edge of Miletown hamlet. It was Saturday, and although Frank Overton attended school at "the cross roads," three miles away on week days, he was now free, and he had taken his home-made hand-sled and gone to ride down hill or "coast" alone on a neighboring snow-clad hillside. The hill was steep and smooth along one narrow space, but on each side of this way there were rocks and pitfalls. The narrow way was really a road which was not used in winter.

At the foot of the hill this road went straight for a short space, and then made a turn and ran along the high bank of a stream. As it was full twenty-feet down from the roadbed on the bank of the creek to the water, now covered with ice in the sheer fall, it can be readily seen that Frank had chosen a rather dangerous locality to coast in. But he had ridden down the hills, rode at lightning speed on his hand-sled in safety so often that he no longer had any fear of his ability to guide his sled around the curve at the foot of the hill all right. The lad knew, however, naturally, that if he failed to turn the curve going with the great velocity acquired in a long steep ascent his sledge would go shooting on with him like an arrow straight over the rocky bank down twenty feet to a terrible fall. Frank was natur-

ally a daring boy and perhaps the very danger of the sport fascinated him. Anyhow he was fond of riding down the dangerous hill road.

The boy was a good deal troubled to-day, however. Daddy Cuthbert had always been very kind to him, and Frank loved the old man. The physician had assured the boy that his foster-father could at the furthest live only until the buds came in the springtime, and the lad was sorrowful because of this. He wondered what he should do when his only friend was dead. Then his thoughts went back over the years, and he remembered his poor mother dying in poverty and that she had told him his father had lost his life in the Black Hills, whither he had gone as a gold seeker at the time of the excitement over new discoveries there. This was all Frank knew about his father. But he was further informed that he was all alone in the world without a living relative. Since sleighing had come Frank more than ever regretted the loss of his horse, which he believed Giles Arkhart had stolen, for Daddy Cuthbert did not own a horse, a single pair of oxen being the only animals he had with which to plow and till his farm.

Frank had gone to the top of the steep hill road, and he was coming down the slide upon his sledge at full speed when all at once, just as he neared the dangerous curve at the foot of the hill he heard a familiar whinny, the neigh of a horse. The boy's heart gave a quick leap, and he turned his head and glanced into a snowy thicket by the roadside, from whence the sound he had heard issued. And there, half concealed in the thicket, and securely tied to a tree, Frank beheld his horse, all saddled and bridled, and evidently but recently ridden to the spot. The discovery of his long-lost horse, and the unbounded surprise which the sight of the animal occasioned Frank, caused him to forget for the moment that he was shooting toward the dangerous curve, where he must be alert to guide his sledge or go over the ledge down the twenty-foot fall below.

Too late Frank bethought himself of his danger. He dug his feet into the snow, and desperately strove to round the curve, but in one instant, before he could throw himself off the sledge, it shot over the bank. Down, down through space went Frank and his sledge. The boy fell half stunned in the midst of a snowbank that had drifted against the rocks. The sleigh went on and struck the frozen surface of the stream beyond with a crash. Frank was buried out of sight in the great drift, and as he fully regained his faculties and was about to scramble out of the drift, not being seriously hurt, he heard voices, and with a start of surprise he cautiously lifted his head above the snow, and saw two men standing under an overhanging ledge of the stream-bank near by, looking at his sledge, which they had drawn to their feet.

At one glance, with astonishment not devoid of apprehension and fear, Frank recognized the two men before him. One was Giles Arkhart, the other was a drunken vagabond Indian, called "Big John," who wandered about ostensibly selling baskets and doing odd jobs for the farmers. Giles Arkhart was a sinister-looking bearded ruffian, and Big John, the Indian, was not one whose appearance inspired confidence. He was an ugly-

looking fellow indeed. Frank's name was carved on the sled, and Giles Arkhart had seen it.

"I reckon, John, that ther boy must 'er come over the ledge with ther sled, an' if, as I hope is the case, he's knocked his brains out it's all right. But s'posin' he hasn't, an' he should see me? He'd be dead certain ter set the Miletown men arter me, an' once they caught me it would be a swing by the neck. It war a risky thing fer me ter come back, an' a-ridin' Frank Overton's hoss, too. But twenty thousand cold dollars are a big stake, an' well worth taken a big risk fer," said Giles Arkhart.

"Ugh! John say look about. Find boy. If he alive fix him so he no run away to set men after us," replied the vagabond Indian fiercely.

"Right you are, John. Come, we'll look fer the boy among the drifts. The man we hev tracked all the way from Sioux City won't be along until night anyhow, an' we've got time to spare afore we go for the old fellow's twenty thousand when he comes along," assented Giles.

"Ugh!" grunted Big John approvingly.

Then the two scoundrels advanced through the snow, and as luck would have it they presently came straight through the drift toward Frank, and he felt that he was in great peril.

CHAPTER II.—The Unknown Father.

Frank did not know what to do. It was impossible for him to discern any way to elude the two men who were looking for him. He thought of burrowing in the drift, but he knew Giles Arkhart and Big John would be sure to trick him up. Nearer and nearer came the men the lad feared. But all at once they halted but a few feet away, and Giles Arkhart said:

"I hear voices. Some men are coming up the creek on the ice, but we can't see 'em on account of the bend yonder."

"Ugh! Big John see quick," uttered Giles' companion, and he went and peered around the bend in the bank of which the horse thief had spoken.

In a moment Big John glided back to Giles and said quickly:

"Some white men out hunting—soon be here. Come, we go fast, else be seen!"

"Come up the bank. We'll git our horses an' ride back to the timber. That will be as good a place as any to waylay the old man," said Giles Arkhart.

Frank drew a deep breath of relief, as a moment subsequently he heard the two rascals clambering up the steep bank. Presently the sound of receding horses' hoofs told they had ridden off. Then Frank emerged from the drift, and not many moments later six men from the hamlet of Miletown, who were out snow hunting, came up. Frank was determined to make an attempt to recover his horse and secure the thief, and in a few words he informed the hunters of what had just transpired where he met them.

"I am sure we shall find Giles Arkhart and Indian John in the wood along the road further north, where they have gone to wait for some poor traveler whom they mean to rob," said Frank in conclusion.

The hunters at once resolved to set out to capture the horse thieves, and Frank led them. The party gained the road and began to trail Arkhart and his comrade by the tracks their horses left in the snow. Reaching the woods, Frank's party discovered Giles Arkhart and Indian John—as "Big John" was sometimes designated. The two rascals were surprised and captured. Then the farmers were for stringing them up at once, but Frank interposed, saying:

"We have no positive proof against Big John, since no one has identified his horse as a stolen animal, and as to Giles Arkhart, I am the only one who can swear he has suffered by his honesty, and so I ought to be allowed my say regarding his punishment."

"That's a fact, Frank," said the leader of the hunters. "You shall act as judge, and we'll do as you say, fer we wouldn't have caught our birds but for you."

"All right. Then I say these men's lives shall be spared. But, to teach them a lesson, I propose we give them as sound a thrashing as irate schoolmaster ever gave a pupil, and then turn them loose and warn them not to come near Mile-town again," said Frank.

The others assented to this proposition, and hickory switches were cut and the two rascals received a well-deserved flogging. They bore the punishment mutely, but with terrible expressions on their evil faces, and both seemed to direct their fierce glances at Frank especially. When the two rascals were set free, they hurried off smarting with pain, but saying not a word. When at a safe distance, however, Giles Arkhart paused, and shaking his fist at Frank menacingly, he shouted:

"You led the whippers on ter us! You are the one we owe this dog's punishment ter, an' we'll git even with ye yet, Frank Overton, afore we die!"

"Ugh! me kill! me kill!" screamed the Indian.

The hunters only laughed derisively, and riding his recovered horse, Frank returned with his friends, and Giles and Big John passed out of sight. But Frank's joy at getting back his horse was marred, to some extent, by the reflection that instead of being grateful to him for having saved their lives the two horse thieves now regarded him with the most bitter and vindictive hatred. The farmers thought that Giles and Big John would get out of that part of the country as soon as they could. But the more Frank thought of the matter the more he was inclined to think the two scoundrels might even yet linger in the neighborhood to waylay the unknown party they were evidently plotting to rob. It was night when Frank and the hunters arrived at Daddy Cuthbert's, and there the latter left the boy. Frank was met at the gate by Zeb, the darky farmhand, heretofore casually mentioned as Daddy Cuthbert's one servant. Zeb was a very fat, good-natured colored man and devoted to Frank. He was delighted to see the boy come home riding his long-lost horse, and he hastened to ask a dozen questions in as many breaths. Frank rode the horse to the stable in the rear of the house, and while caring for the animal he told Zeb of his adventures that afternoon.

"Gollie, Frank, I done know dat feller Giles. He am a berry bad feller, an' I'se dead certain

he won't gin up ther plan he's got ter rob some one; yer don't know what am comin' 'less you an' me got our guns an' go fer ter spile de game ob dem lowdown trash, Giles an' the Injun," suggested Zeb.

"I really think it's our duty to do so, assented Frank, and a few moments later, as the shadows fell densely over the snow-clad Dakota plains, Zeb followed Frank toward the woods where the villains might yet be lurking.

Stealthily Frank and Zeb advanced when they arrived at the edge of the timber through which the road ran. They had taken but a few steps when from the gloomy, narrow way ahead rang out a sharp cry of agony. Frank and Zeb bounded forward and a few paces distant. When they had rounded a sharp bend in the road, they saw a man lying on the ground. Over the fallen one stood Giles and Big John, and the former was opening a money belt about the waist of the man on the ground.

"Furies!" exclaimed the villain, in a great rage, casting the belt from him. "It's empty! I've tracked him for nothing. He must have left the twenty thousand I know he had in his belt at Sioux City somewhere for safety."

"Ugh! Bab job, kill man no git nothing," the Indian grunted.

At that instant he heard the approach of Frank and Zeb.

"Quick! Men come!" he cried, and leaping aside, he disappeared in the dense snow-clad undergrowth.

Giles followed the Indian, and reaching the man they had struck down, as a wound in the back of the victim told, Frank and Zeb heard the wretches' receding footsteps die away in the distance in a moment or so. Frank and Zeb lifted up the fallen man. He was yet alive but insensible, and they carried him to Daddy Cuthbert's house, first securing his empty money belt about his waist. When they reached the house, assisted by the good old housekeeper, they searched the clothing of the unconscious man, but failed to find anything on his person to tell his name or give them the slightest clew to his identity. They diligently strove to revive him, but did not succeed in doing so. All night the poor man lay unconscious. Next morning Frank set out to bring the nearest doctor. After the boy had been gone an hour or so Luke Grindle, the man who held the mortgage on Daddy's Cuthbert's farm, came to the house to see his creditor. Zeb admitted him to the room in which the unknown stranger lay, and the darky related what had befallen him. The face of the wounded man was turned away from Luke Grindle when he came in, but when Zeb left the room presently Grindle viewed the face of the stranger. Then he started back in great surprise, muttering:

"He is David Overton, Frank Overton's father, who was supposed to have perished in the Black Hills. In other days he was my successful rival. I always hated him, and I hate him yet."

An evil, cunning look came upon Grindle's face. He listened, but did not hear Zeb returning. Then he opened the wounded man's money belt, and in it he found a slip of paper which had chanced to escape discovery by other searchers. The paper was a certificate of deposit, showing that David Overton had deposited twenty thousand dollars.

in a certain bank in Sioux City a few days previously. Quickly Grindle slipped the certificate of deposit into his own pocket.

"He may die without being able to tell who he is, and if so I mean this certificate shall yet enable me to get possession of his twenty thousand dollars. Ha! To think the boy Frank might have found it. Ah, I'm lucky. Frank Overton shall never know he is the heir of this fortune if I can prevent it," muttered Luke Grindle.

He was unconscious of the fact, but when he secured the certificate the face of Giles Arkhart was pressed against the glass of a small window, and the horse thief saw him rob the unconscious man. As Giles glided away from the window, Luke turned from the bedside and Zeb entered, and then the villainous money-lender followed the negro to the room of Daddy Cuthbert. After a short business interview with the invalid, Grindle left the house and hastened home. Meanwhile, not long after Grindle was gone, Frank returned, and with him came a county doctor. The man of drugs, after examining the patient, said he could not live and must die soon, but that he would probably regain his senses first. Such was the fact. Frank was left alone with the wounded man. Suddenly he came to his senses, and seeing Frank, an expression of joy came upon his face, for he recognized his son. He tried to speak but failed, and then he signaled the boy to open his money belt and turn it inside out. Frank did so, but found nothing. An awful look came upon the face of the dying man as he saw the belt was empty. Then he faintly gasped:

"My certificate of deposit for twenty thousand dollars was in that belt. It was for you—my—my——"

He wanted to say "my son." But his strength left him, and the next moment he was dead, and Frank Overton had no one to reveal to him the truth that he was at the deathbed of his own father. By this time Luke Grindle had reached home. He was alone in the barn putting up his horse when Giles Arkhart and Indian John suddenly entered the stable and controuted him:

"What do you rascals want here?" demanded Grindle, feeling for a revolver in his pocket.

"Go easy, Luke Grindle. You can't afford to quarrel with us. I was at the window of Cuthbert's house a bit ago and I saw ye take the certificate outen Dave Overton's money belt. I tracked him all the way from Sioux City ter git the money, but he fooled me by puttin' it in the bank. Now I know yer little game, an' you have got to agree to share with me an' John if yer git the money. Come, what do yer say?" said Giles, with a cunning leer.

CHAPTER III.—The Snowbound School.

Luke Grindle saw that he must make terms with the two scoundrels, and he did not shrink from involving himself with them in a deep and cowardly plot against Frank Overton. But at that moment a clear, musical, girlish voice rang out calling.

"Mr. Grindle! Mr. Grindle!"

The succeeding moment pretty Ruth Vanwert, Luke Grindle's step-daughter, the daughter of the

now widower money-lender's second wife by that good woman's first husband, appeared at the barn door. Ruth was about sixteen and a real Western beauty—the picture of health and happiness. She started at the sight of the two men whom she beheld in company with Grindle, for she knew they had an evil reputation.

"What do you want, Ruth?" demanded Grindle sharply, while Giles Arkhart regarded the maiden with a look of insolent admiration that made her blush.

"A neighbor just rode by and told me a stranger died at Cuthbert's house a few moments ago. I thought you might like to know the rather startling news," said Ruth.

"I'm not interested. Go to the house," said Grindle, crabbedly, and Ruth withdrew. But as she passed out of sight she heard Giles mention Frank Overton's name in a threatening voice.

"What can that rascal be saying about Frank, my dear Frank, whose little wife I have promised to be some day, and whom I love with all my heart," murmured Ruth.

Then, obeying a sudden impulse, she stole back and listened. Unseen and unsuspected, she heard the following conversation:

"So he is dead. Now I begin to feel sure of the money. But I fear the boy Frank. Something seems to tell me that he will yet dispute my claim to the money," said Grindle.

"We hate the boy. John and I have vowed vengeance upon him," hissed Giles.

"Good! I'll find out if the man revealed anything before he died, and if he did not, then I'll join hands with you and Big John, Grindle. We'll have the dead man's money and share it. Come and see me to-morrow or next day, and we will lay all our future plans," said Giles.

Giles and Big John agreed to this. Then there was some unimportant talk, and Ruth glided away just before the two villains took their departure. The girl was alarmed. She felt that there was a mystery relating to her boy lover, and that he was in danger. She meant to warn him at the first chance. But she was ill next day, and for several days, having taken a severe cold, and she had no opportunity to see Frank. Meantime Frank Overton's father was buried, and the boy did not suspect the truth. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday passed, and still although Grindle looked for them impatiently, Giles Arkhart and Big John did not come to his house as they had agreed. On Thursday, the 10th, however, about noon, as Grindle went out to the barn to feed his horses he saw the two horse thieves lurking under a shed. They had been afraid to come openly to the house, for fear some of Grindle's neighbors might be there. Grindle assured the scoundrels that just then there was no one in the house but Ruth, and he led them into the kitchen. The weather was very cold, and the Indian shrugged his shoulders as he glanced up at the leaden sky, and said:

"Ugh! Hab big storm soon. John 'fraid of big blizzard."

Big John had some reputation as a weather prophet, and Giles and Grindle looked apprehensive as they heard his words, well knowing the awful peril to man and beast entailed by the terrible blizzards of the Northwest in winter. Ruth saw the trio enter the house from a window

upstairs, and her solicitude for Frank made her play the part of an eavesdropper at the door of the kitchen.

"Well," said Grindle, presently, "the man died at Cuthbert's, and nobody found out anything about him, so now if we can get the boy Frank out of the way I feel sure we can ultimately get the money. Though the boy don't know the truth I've found out he has a suspicion, for the dying man tried to tell him something, and what he succeeded in saying set the lad thinking."

Grindle had overheard Frank telling Zeb about what the dead man had said just as he died. The villain had called at Cuthbert's, and listened at the door before he knocked, thus gaining the information he now told of.

"We hev got to git hold of the boy ter make all safe. Now I'll tell ye what Big John and I will do. Frank Overton went ter school ter-day down ter the cross-road school-house as usual. He's got ter travel a lonely road ter go home after school, an' John and I will lay for him, crack his skull, and drop him through an air-hole in the creek. But you hev fust off got to agree that we three share the old feller's money equally," said Giles Arkhart.

"I so agree and there's my grip on it," said Grindle, and he shook hands with Giles.

Then Ruth was called to get the two rascals something to eat. This she did, and at about two o'clock they left the house. Ruth heard Arkhart say to Grindle as he went out:

"We'll go now ter lay in ambush fer the boy."

Soon after the horse thieves withdrew Grindle mounted a horse and started for the post office at Miletown. Meantime the indications of a coming storm had increased steadily and the snow began to fall. But as yet the wind had not become unusually high, and no one dreamed that the ordinary storm was soon to develop into a terrible blizzard, the most terrible ever known in the Northwest. Ruth had been in a fever of excitement and almost frantic with anxiety ever since she heard the murder plot that had been hatched against Frank. The noble girl resolved to go to the school-house at the cross-roads and warn Frank and thus save his life. As soon as Grindle was out of sight, Ruth put on a warm fur-coat and hood and started for the school-house, which was nearly two miles from her home. The school-house stood alone. There was no dwelling in sight. The building was under a ridge and the nearest farm-house was about three-quarters of a mile beyond the ridge that concealed it from one looking from the school-house. Ruth had not gone far when she was overtaken by Zeb, the colored man from Cuthbert's. In a few words Ruth told Zeb all, for she knew he was devoted to Frank.

"'Deed, honey, you bettah go back home. De storm am gettin' wuss an' wuss, an' if it should change inter a reg'lar blizard you would done perish in de storm sure, but a big nigger like ole Zeb would be all right. Yes, gal, go home quick, an' I'll go on an' warn Frank agin them low-down trash," said Zeb earnestly.

But even while the honest fellow spoke the first gust of the awful blizzard struck them with terrific force. Both were lifted off their feet and hurled upon the snowy earth. The roar of the gale was like a hurricane in wild fury, and the

dry, powdered snow was swept along with it, and dust and debris of every sort in awful, irresistible and blinding, suffocating clouds. In a few moments' time the temperature fell to forty below, and soon the gale, as subsequently estimated, was rushing along with awful velocity at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. Ruth and Zeb was caught in the awful storm, the horrors of which no pen can adequately depict, and which only those who have experienced the same can fully appreciate. The girl struggled to her feet—she was blinded, choking. Madly she clutched at her throat, while the deadly cold struck to her heart as it suddenly came with the racing gale. She could not see Zeb. She could not see anything save the awful cloud of powdered snow that cut her like a thousand pins, and whizzed like lightning. Ruth turned this way and that. She found voice to shriek:

"Zeb! Zeb! Zeb!"

No answer came back. Ruth knew she must reach shelter or die. Her own house was nearest. She started for it, as she thought. But she soon found she had missed her way in the blinding gale.

"I am lost in the blizzard!"

Then she went on and on wildly, she knew not where, fighting for life. Lost in the blizzard, and she shouted for help until she fell amid the snow, and could not rise again, and the pitiless storm beat over her. Meanwhile Frank Overton was at the school-house. There were some twenty pupils in attendance that day, and the teacher was a young woman who boarded at the nearest house. When the storm came up the teacher wisely dismissed school, for she feared that a heavy storm was at hand, and she wished to have her pupils get home before it gathered its full power. Most of the pupils lived within a radius of a mile of the school-house, and these the teacher started for home at once. Frank Overton and six other boys, who lived further away—the home of some being two, three and even four miles distant, seeing the storm increase, and fearing a blizzard, dared not start for home.

They consulted, and decided to stay all night in the school-house, rather than risk their lives in trying to get home then. They soon had reason to congratulate themselves on their decision to remain. The blizzard burst in all its fury, as we have described. But the boys were happy in the thought that their schoolmates and the teacher, who lived at a comparatively short distance, must have reached home safely. The school-house was a rude but substantial building, and there were shutters on the windows which the boys closed in anticipation of the gale. There were two tiers of benches running along the side walls and the space between was open, save for the place occupied by the teacher's desk against the center of the rear wall. In the center of the room was a large stove. The building was one story high, and the attic could be reached by a ladder which stood in one corner, resting in the square hole in the ceiling, through which one must pass to the attic. In the roof was a door near the chimney, placed there for convenience, as in that land of high winds chimneys were frequently blown off, and in such a case a door in the roof came handy. Back of the store was a huge wood box, and the boys filled it with wood

from a shed distant about twenty feet from the door of the building before the storm became a blizzard.

When the terrible gale came the seven school-boys who remained in the school-house huddled about the stove, in which they had built a great fire. They had fuel to last all night, and as the hours wore on, and they knew they must at least remain until morning, they got the remnants of their noon lunch and made a scanty supper. All were anxious, and the younger boys of the party were inclined to whimper, but Frank Overton and his particular friend, Tom Bentley, a splendid, whole-souled boy, tried to cheer the others up and encourage them. Ben Kidd, a burly boy a year older than Frank, and who had long prided himself on being the bully of the school, was the only one whose conduct tended to render the situation worse than it would otherwise have been. Ben was a selfish fellow, and he insisted upon forcing the smaller boys away from the stove and getting the most heat himself. The intense cold rendered it a matter of life to keep from getting chilled, and Frank, fearing for some of the weak little boys if forced away from the fire too long, ventured to reprove and remonstrate with Ben.

The schoolboy bully talked fight, and Frank's indignation got the better of him, and in a moment he knocked Ben down. Ben wasn't used to anything of the kind, and like all bullies he was a coward at heart, and one good blow took all the fight out of him. But from that moment he held a grudge against Frank. All night the snow-bound schoolboys kept up a roaring fire and thus prevented getting frozen. In the morning, after listening a while and looking ruefully at each other by the light from the fire, for the blinds kept out the light from outside, Frank and Tom Bentley decided that the blizzard had subsided somewhat, and they decided to take a look out of one of the windows. They pushed up the sash and tried to turn the blind, but to their surprise they found they could not do so. Then they discovered that the snow was drifted above the windows.

"We are snow-bound indeed, Tom," said Frank in troubled tones.

"But come, let's go to the roof and see how we really are situated," he added.

Tom assented and they clambered up to the attic and thence to the roof through the door of the chimney. Then what a sight met their eyes. The blizzard had lulled for the time, and they saw, as they crept out on the roof and stood clinging to the chimney, that all the school-house, save a part of the roof and the chimney, were buried in a vast drift banked up against the ridge beyond. Not a living thing or human habitation was in sight. Everywhere the bleak white winter landscape, deserted and dreary, with massive drifts, piled one above the other on all sides, met the schoolboys' gaze. An awful fear came to their hearts, and they crept back through the door in the roof, trembling with cold and terror.

"Frank, we shall starve or freeze to death here before help can reach us. And hark! The blizzard is commencing again," said Tom, in low, awed tones, as once more the dread voice of the storm was heard.

Frank shuddered, but said nothing then. Descending, he and Tom told their boy comrades

they were snow-bound—buried in a mighty drift, and all showed great alarm. The day went by. The fuel was used sparingly, and so the house was kept comfortable. The snow-banks around it now shut out the cold. As night came on again the boys' hunger became painful. Some of the little fellows cried and moaned pitifully. The dark shadow of despair was falling on all when Frank, in lifting up a board from the floor, which he meant to burn for fuel, found that it had been displaced there and was not now fast. As he moved the board he saw under the floor an Indian blanket. While all gathered about Frank, greatly astonished at his find, he lifted out the blanket and in it was a powder-horn and a bag of shot.

Frank saw some carving on the powder-horn and deciphered the name of "Big John." At once the idea occurred to Frank that he had found a cache of the vagabond Indian, and he investigated further. The result was that he drew out from under the floor a bag of side meat and some corn-bread, and a large package, which he had no time to open then.

"Ah," said Frank, as his companions uttered cries of delight at the sight of the food he had found. "Now I understand the meaning of the moccasin tracks I found in the snow leading to the school-house several mornings recently. It's clear Big John has been camping in the school-house nights and that he hid these provisions under the floor."

"Well, we'll have a feast now, boys. Give me the bag of bread and meat, Frank Overton!" demanded Ben Kidd.

"No!" cried Frank, putting the bag between his feet and standing over it.

"Ys. We'll have the food!" cried Kidd.

"Yes, yes!" shouted all the boys save Tom Bentley, pressing up in support of Ben Kidd.

Tom placed himself beside Frank, for he saw the other boys were bent on having the food.

"At him, fellers! We'll have the food, and show you you ain't boss here, Frank Overton!" cried Kidd.

The next moment the five starving boys were rushing at Frank and Tom, led by Ben Kidd.

"Hold!" cried Frank, brandishing a stick of wood which he had snatched up. "Are you all fools? Don't you know I have your good at heart? If you recklessly devour this food now we shall all soon starve. We must save it and divide it up so that each shall receive barely enough to sustain life from day to day. We can't tell how long we may be buried here in the snow!"

CHAPTER IV.—Another Loss In the Blizzard.

Meanwhile the blizzard, in its wild, resistless fury, had swept over the entire Northwest, blocking railroads in five States, and accomplishing a sacrifice of human life whose fatal lists grew hourly, until the appalling records numbered hundreds. Everywhere it was conceded that this was beyond question the most terrible storm ever known in the Northwest. Even the great storm of January, 1873, could not compare with this one in destructiveness and loss of life. As we have already taken occasion to intimate, the storm came with little warning. At sunrise Dakota

had never had more lovely winter weather; the air was clear as crystal, the wind was from the south, and warm for the season. The farmers throughout the storm-swept country took advantage of the favorable weather to go to town, to draw wood, coal, hay, and many were abroad when the storm burst. About noon a cloud was seen along the western horizon lying near the ground, but stretching from west to north in a dark semi-circle. Little attention was paid to this harbinger of the coming blizzard in most instances. But in less than one hour's time the cloud had swept over the country, the sun was obscured, the snow was falling, and a gale was sweeping from the northwest with fury. The great blizzard had begun. The mercury fell rapidly and all the while the wind increased in fury, driving all who were abroad to seek the nearest shelter with all possible expedition. Besides those of our characters whom we have already seen caught in the terrible storm, there was another whose movements and experiences in the blizzard it is of direct importance to the comprehension of ensuing events that we should place on record here.

Luke Grindle, the rascally money-lending farmer, we recollect, had started on horseback for Miletown just previously to the commencement of the blizzard. The villain was scarcely out of sight of his farm-house when Ruth left it and set out for the cross-road school house to warn Frank Overton of the plot which she had heard Giles Arkhart, Big John, the vagabond Indian, and her step-father discussing. Wiser than Ruth, and not governed by motives of devotion, love and humanity as was the noble girl, but thinking only of making sure of his personal security, Luke Grindle, as he rode forward toward the town, saw the blizzard surely coming, and he at once took the alarm. Instantly he wheeled his horse and urged the animal homeward with whip and spur, plying both mercilessly. The snow fell thicker and thicker about the flying horseman, the same pitiless snow, ground to powder and hurled along by the wind, that overwhelmed poor Ruth and honest Zeb, Frank Overton's colored friend. On the desolate prairie an object a few feet distant could not be seen. A man's voice, though he shouted with all his might, could not be heard six feet away.

"This is awful. Great Scott! have I missed my way? Heaven help me, kin it be I'm lost in the blizzard?" thought Luke Grindle all at once after he had breasted the storm for some time, and it seemed to him he should have arrived at his home.

The air, full of snow as fine as flour, seemed to stifle him, and the roaring of the wind and the darkness, caused by so much snow in the air, made the situation most dismal and terrible. An awful fear seized upon Luke Grindle, and made him suffer more than the intense cold and the driving snow. Luke Grindle had been a sneerer all his life at everything good. He had never benefited the world any, and now that the chances were he would have to leave it, the sudden terror bound to come to such men at some time grasped his sinking heart. But Luke Grindle was shrewd, and even in the battle for life in the great blizzard his presence of mind did not entirely desert him. Since he was convinced

that he could not guide his horse aright in the blinding storm, he resolved at least to let the animal pick his own way, and trust the instinct of the brute to reach his stable. Grindle let go of the reins, clasped his arms about the neck of the horse, and lying close along the animal's back, he clung there for dear life, while the furious gale each moment threatened to sweep both horse and rider away.

But the horse was a powerful creature, and he kept his feet and forged ahead, until at last he brought his master to the door of the stable on his own farm. Chilled to the bone, scarcely able to move, Luke Grindle slid from the back of his horse, and managed to open the stable door and stagger into the shelter, followed by the animal which had saved him. The next gust of wind closed the door with a furious slam and Luke Grindle secured it, and then he sank down in a heap of straw, wrapping horse blankets about him and seeking to rub the circulation back to his benumbed limbs. The farmer's house was about sixty feet from the barn, and when at length he felt himself able to walk again, he took advantage of a slight momentary lull in the storm and succeeded in reaching the house, though he was nearly frozen on the way.

More than one person was frozen in the great blizzard, according to the published account, while going but a few yards. Reaching the house, Luke Grindle found a good fire and Mrs. Grimes, his housekeeper, and a couple of hired men employed on the farm, who had returned to the house before the blizzard burst, but after Ruth's departure, were in the kitchen. Grindle was soon thawed out, and passing into a small room where he kept his desk and papers, he carefully took the certificate of deposit which he had stolen from Frank Overton's father he had died unknown, and, opening his desk, was about to place the precious document in it for safe keeping. But just at that instant the wind dashed in a window at his side, and a whirling gale surged like an Arctic maelstrom through the room. The stolen certificate for the twenty thousand dollars, which was rightfully Frank Overton's inheritance, was whisked out of Luke Grindle's hand like a flash, and the gale whirled it away out through the window into the driving blizzard. Grindle uttered an oath of rage and consternation; then for the nonce, heedless of the storm, he sprang through the window after the paper, which he meant should yet bring him the dead man's money.

The storm swallowed Grindle up. He was buffeted, blinded, submerged, whirled hither and yon, a veritable plaything for the winter's tempest. The icy chill brought him to his senses. He realized his folly and sought to fight his way back. He might not have succeeded had not the voices of his farm-hands from inside the house, who shouted loudly, faintly reached his dazed hearing and served to guide him. Grindle was able to take his bearings, and after a struggle gained the house, and when he was able to speak he explained his conduct to his household, every member of which was ready to affirm that he had taken leave of his senses. Grindle said that a valuable paper had been blown out of the window, and that he had gone in pursuit of it. Of course the rascal was careful not to reveal what

the paper which had been lost to him under such singular circumstances really was.

CHAPTER V.—"Ruth."

But all at once Grindle observed that he had not seen Ruth since he reached his home on horseback since the advent of the storm. His rage and disappointment over the loss of the certificate of deposit were the dominant sentiments of his sordid brain. But yet a feeling of some anxiety about his step-daughter came upon him at this time.

"Where is Ruth?" he demanded of Mrs. Grimes, who assured him she did not know, but supposed she was upstairs in her room.

Luke Grindle opened the stair door, at the head of which was Ruth's sleeping room, and shouted: "Ruth! Ruth!"

As there was no answer, now really alarmed, he ascended. Then it was soon known that Ruth was not in the house, for every room was searched, and she was not found.

"She's lost, lost in the blizzard. But why she left the house I can't understand. Drat her, she allers was a heedless critter," said Luke Grindle.

And thus he took the fate of poor lost Ruth. But suddenly a thought came to his mind that made him start. He recollected that Frank Overton was Ruth's boyish lover, and the idea came to his brain that Ruth might have overheard something of the plot he and his confederates had discussed against the boy. Luke Grindle hit upon the truth when he said mentally, after some reflection:

"It's possible the gal started out to warn Frank Overton agin Giles Arkhart and Big John, the Injun. If so, drat her, maybe it's better she is lost in the blizzard, for it wouldn't do to have her hold sich a secret over our heads."

Grindle thought:

"Like enough Giles an' the Injun are done for in the blizzard, an' I'm a-thinkin' the chances are Frank Overton was caught in the storm if he started for home. Well, well, I hold the secret of the twenty thousand dollars, and certificate or no, I mean to have it yet."

But leaving Luke Grindle, whom we are sure is an unpleasant character in the estimation of all our readers, let us refer to one in whom there is more interest. Ruth Vanwert was overpowered by the blizzard. We saw her fall in the snow and saw the storm beat over her. But there was the spirit of the true heroine in that young girl. Despair had seized upon her as she felt the benumbing chill of the air and the powdered snow suffocated her. But love of life was strong in her breast, she had so much to live for. Life was so bright, she battled for breath as she lay in the snow and threw her cloak over her head, thus shutting out the powder snow; she could breathe, the faintness passed away. The insensibility that was stealing upon her lost power.

Ruth tried to summon her presence of mind. To think lucidly, to discern if there was even a faint hope for her; she recollected where she was when the storm burst; she estimated how far she might have wandered in a given direction. Then all at once her heart thrilled as like a harbinger of hope the memory came that she was possibly very near a certain deserted cabin with

the location of which she had been familiar. Inspired by the new hope born of this thought, Ruth regained her feet and stumbled on. Suddenly she came up against a fence, she put forth her hand and grasped a gate with a large, rude wooden bar. Then Ruth felt that God had heard her soul's unspoken prayer for mercy, and she knew the cabin she sought was just beyond the gate at which she had arrived. But the blinding cloud of snow rendered the hovel Ruth had bethought herself of invisible. She opened the gate, and an instant later she reeled into the shelter she had so gravely battled to reach.

She had power to close the door and shut out the storm and the snow, and then she fell in a dead faint. The wind howled on, the storm raged, the blizzard held sway when Ruth revived, as she did in a few moments. Then she knew she must have heat, must battle against the cold with fire or perish. She searched about for fuel.

In the wide fire-place of the cabin was a back log, half consumed. In a "leanto" Ruth found part of a cord of fire-wood. She had matches in her pocket, by a rare chance, and working as one can who works for life, she soon had a fire roaring in the fire-place. Warmed by the grateful heat, Ruth crouched close to the hearth and drew her fur cloak and hood closely around her, and she was soon warmed comfortably. Then Ruth had time to more calmly collect her thoughts and reflect upon what had transpired. The most consuming solicitude on account of Frank was experienced by Ruth now. Though she was inclined to think the blizzard had driven the intended assassins from their work of murder, Ruth feared that Frank, homeward bound from school, would be lost in the blizzard. As to what had become of poor faithful Zeb, from whom the furious gale had suddenly separated her, Ruth could have but one conjecture. She thought he must have perished, and the reflection saddened her. She knew that if Zeb was a victim of the storm, Frank had lost a faithful friend, though he was a humble one. Alone with her own anxious thoughts, with Ruth the hours went by slowly. She kept up the fire, and tried not to feel alarmed. But she was lonely, and despite her efforts to banish all such fears from her mind, certain alarming possibilities suggested themselves. Certainly it was not a pleasant experience to be alone in that isolated cabin, a defenseless girl at the mercy of any evil character who might pass that way. But Ruth strove to reassure herself, and she thought:

"Why should I fear? No one is abroad in this storm. Until it subsides not even those who would eagerly search for the lost can venture forth."

The hours of night came on and the wind howled in strange voices all about the lone cabin where Ruth crouched by the fireside. The blizzard beat against the door and rattled the shutters on the one window. It seemed to Ruth that all the spirits of the storm were clamoring for admission there, but she bent closer to the blaze and shuddered, while the blizzard raged over her shelter. It was a strange fancy, but it seemed to the young girl, all alone and storm-bound, that as she gazed into the red flames on the hearth she saw there the faces of Giles Arkhart and Big John, the Indian vagabond. Ruth felt

a growing apprehension, a certain sense of danger. She feared Giles Arkhart more than any living man. In other days when he had played the role of an honest man, Arkhart had sought to urge a lover's suit with Ruth. But she read his soul and held herself aloof with horror. And once Arkhart has hissed in her ear a threat that now made her feel the most intense terror, and yet there was no visible danger. Finally, as the night wore on, Ruth resolved to try to sleep. She knelt in the red glow of the fire-light, and in that attitude of prayer, before she sank down and reclined on the hearth, she made a pretty picture. And the rude setting of the scene was not calculated to detract from its singular impressiveness.

Ruth prayed for Frank, for Zeb, and for divine protection for herself, and then at the last moment and utterly exhausted, nature assumed sway, and she slept. But from a dream which caused her sweet lips to part in a smile, Ruth suddenly awakened. She knew not what had aroused her at first, but she stirred the failing fire for an instant into a brighter flame. Then there came a sound at the door. She listened. Surely some one was trying to open the door. The next moment the insecure fastening yielded, and into the cabin stalked Giles Arkhart and Big John, the Indian.

Faithful Zeb, the black farmhand, who had set out with Ruth to the schoolhouse, met with a similar experience as Ruth. The colored man was swept off his feet by the blizzard. Suddenly he felt himself shoved up against a team which was drawing a box wagon. The wagon box had been turned upside down by the storm. In a moment Zeb was under it. When the storm had passed Zeb came from under; soon again the storm came on again more fierce than before, and he struggled on and came upon a cabin and found the door, which he pushed open. He stumbled into a room and beheld Giles Arkhart and Big John. While they were talking Zeb saw Ruth's hood partially concealed behind a wood box.

That morning, the first after the dreadful storm had passed away, the parents of the snow-bound boys were in a terrible state.

Mr. Bentley, Tom's father, and a lot of the citizens were huddled in a church to keep from freezing. A consultation was held and a spy-glass being produced, Mr. Bentley ascended the bellfry to see if he could see anything of the missing ones. All he could perceive was snow. Not a chimney even was visible. He descended and told his comrades what he saw.

Suddenly Mr. Bentley's son's dog, Jeff, bounded in and Mr. Bentley led him to the door and ordered him to go and find Tom. The dog was a big St. Bernard. A small keg containing food, drink and a letter was fastened around his neck. The dog hesitated a moment and then set off for the schoolhouse. Soon after the snow began again.

CHAPTER VI.—Ruth and the Outlaws.

When Ruth Venwert realized that she was alone in the deserted cabin with the two desperate wretches whose character she well knew her terror grew apace. There was an expression upon

Giles Arkhart's swarthy visage that utterly negated the idea that any mercy might be expected of him, or that his heart would prove accessible to a single sentiment of pity. Ruth crouched back against the fire-place, an expression of terror supplementing the look of startled surprise her features first wore. She clasped her small hands involuntarily over her wildly pulsating heart and looked at Giles Arkhart and Big John, the Indian vagabond, beseechingly. Through her mind flashed the recollection that in days past the horse thief had aspired to become her suitor. Even at that time, when as yet Arkhart's real character had not become known by reason of his unlawful deeds Ruth's womanly discernment and keen perceptive faculties had given her the conviction that he was an evil man—and now Ruth remembered that Giles Arkhart had once vowed in sacrilegious terms that, since he could not win her by fair means he would resort to force, and yet make her repent bitterly the day she declined his suit. Giles Arkhart stood within the cabin for a moment silently devouring the shrinking girl with his fierce, evil glances.

Big John was just behind his white comrade, and his copper-colored visage was distorted by a grin as he observed the expression upon Giles's face. The vagabond Indian had been about the village of Miletown enough to acquire a good deal of knowledge of the affairs of the people of the place, and it seemed that he understood something of the thoughts which were at that moment agitating the minds of the lone girl and the desperado. Giles Arkhart experienced fiendish joy and the most intense satisfaction. The fact that Ruth was at his mercy delighted his wicked heart, and he was exultant and gleeful. He smiled cruelly—a dark, evil look passed swiftly between him and the Indian. Then he said:

"So, so, Miss Ruth; you and I meet under different circumstances from what you thought would ever come about, I reckon. You don't seem over an' above glad ter see an old friend, I must say."

"Giles Arkhart," replied Ruth, shifting about uneasily under his keen, menacing glance, "you know I have no wish for your society under any circumstances."

"No doubt. But for all that you are likely to have a good deal of my company from this time forth. I've not forgotten my oath, and as you shall learn, gal, I mean to make it good."

"I am a defenseless girl, driven by the dreadful storm to seek shelter in this remote, isolated cabin. If you possess one spark of manhood you will respect my unprotected state and my distress at these circumstances."

"Werry putty in speech as well as in person you be, an' I find me old love for ye, gal, is quite as powerful as ever. You hev got to be mine. I'll be frank an' out with ye."

"Have pity," moaned Ruth.

"That's just what I've got, gal. Some fellers might take advantage of the situation, but not me. You consent ter go with me ter Big John's tribe when the storm is over, so we kin travel, an' you shall be treated with due respect by yours truly."

"And should I consent to go with you what will my fate be?"

"A mighty happy one. Once safe among my

copper-colored friends I'll find a missionary to tie the knot for us and make us man and wife all right according to law an' gospel."

Ruth believed Giles Arkhart was sincere. She realized that her only chance for gaining a respite from the present peril lay in acceding to his terms—in promising to go with him to the village of the Sioux when the great blizzard had subsided. Both thought rapidly and profoundly, and in a moment she had arrived at a determination which was very natural. Then she said earnestly:

"Giles Arkhart, I understand precisely how I am placed. Swear that you will keep faith with me, and that I shall not be molested until a legal ceremony makes you my—my husband, and I will promise to go with you."

The desperado's eyes gleamed with satisfaction more complete than ever. He rejoined eagerly:

"I so swear."

Then he added:

"Now the agreement is made between us I'll show you I'm not such a bad sort after all," he added.

Then to Big John:

"Give me your provision bag."

"Ugh, John not got much. Heap much bread an' meat under floor of school-house at cross-roads where John hid him. John been camping nights in school-house some time back."

"Well, there is food enough for the present," Giles said, and he opened the bag and took out bread and meat and gave some to Ruth, saying:

"You must eat, gal."

Ruth meant to live. Wild projects for making her escape were chasing themselves through her feverish brain. Illusive though her hopes were they saved her from complete despair. She accepted the food Arkhart offered her and ate with appetite.

"Now you can sleep again, you're safe," said Giles, as the night wore on.

But Ruth did not sleep. The day dawned and found her alert and watchful though heavy-eyed. During the night Giles and Big John had taken turns in sleeping. Soon after daylight of the first dawn since the advent of the blizzard, Giles gave Ruth food again and then, when he and Big John had eaten, they went to the windows to take an observation. Now the lull in the storm of which Zeb, the faithful colored man, had taken advantage to leave the shelter of the wagon-box was on hand. But the Indian said:

"Ugh! Storm come up strong again soon. We no leave here yet."

Giles assented. A few moments later, when Giles had turned from the window, leaving the Indian standing there, the latter said:

"Ugh! Come here. Some one come!"

Giles sprang to the window and then he and Big John saw that the approaching man was Zeb, the negro.

"That fellow is Frank Overton's friend. He must not see Ruth Vanwert here. Quick, John. We must get the gal out of sight before the nigger arrives," said Giles hastily.

Thus speaking, Giles sprang to Ruth and dragged her into the next room; the cabin fortunately for this purpose consisted of two apartments. Giles did not see that Ruth's knit hood had fallen

beside the wood-box. Having forced Ruth into the next room, Giles hissed in her ear:

"Some one comes. If by so much as a sound you let him know there is any one in the room, I'll send Big John in to kill you. I swear it. Big John is really Cutnose's son, who was supposed to have been killed in the Sioux war in Minnesota, but he escaped. The Indian now known as Big John is 'Red Knife,' the Sioux who massacred seven white women and children at a farm-house in the days of the terrible Minnesota outbreak with his own hands."

CHAPTER VII.—The St. Bernard Among Foes.

Having uttered the terrible threat and revealed the secret of Big John's life, which was the real truth, Giles Arkhart left Ruth in a state of horror that sufficed to hold her enthralled as by unseen bonds. She dared not give utterance to a single sound, much less shout for help, as she would like to have done. Presently she heard Zeb enter the cabin, as we have recorded, and her heart gave a sudden leap as she recognized the voice of the faithful fellow who had set out to go to the cross-roads school-house with her. Ruth was very glad to learn that he had escaped. She was hopeful, too, that some providential incident might convey to the negro the knowledge of her presence. And yet Ruth feared that if Zeb made an attempt to rescue her he would be overpowered by her two desperate and well-armed foes. She recollected that honest black Zeb was unarmed, and she thought he could not be expected to successfully combat two men who were provided with weapons, though she was aware that the negro was a very muscular fellow, and no coward.

The moment Zeb saw Ruth's hood on the cabin floor his suspicions were well nigh positive. He believed then that Ruth was there and that the faint groan he heard was uttered by her. Involuntarily and without her knowing it, Ruth's emotions had wrung from her lips an utterance in the form of a groan, expressive of her mental agony. Zeb understood that the two outlaws had some evil purpose in concealing the presence of Ruth. Quickly he resolved upon the course he would take, while he said mentally:

"In dis game dar are two bowers agin one ace. De two bowers am dem fellers wid de guns; I am de ace. 'Cordin' to all rules of Hoyle, one ace nebber beat two bowers 'less dar was some first-class cheatin' goin' on. So now I'se goin' in to win dis game an' save Miss Ruth by cheatin' dem fellers."

Then Zeb set in to play a part to accomplish his purpose. He was not regarded as worthy of much consideration by the two desperadoes, their manner seemed to say. They had nothing in particular against Zeb, but they wanted to get rid of him, and so when after a time the negro lay down in front of the fire and seemed to sleep, Giles and the Indian began to whisper together. Zeb snored like a sound sleeper, and yet he managed to overhear what the rascals said.

"John," said Giles, "I never told ye, but I long ago made up my mind to have the gal. It's been a secret o' mine, but on her account I've long

hated the boy Frank Overton. Now I'm willin' to let you stay behind, and earn Luke Grindle's money, and execute our vengeance on ther boy, while I push on to the land of the Sioux with the gal when the storm stops."

"Ugh! John say, kill boy if he no die in storm. Get money, den come to village of Sioux, eh?"

"Precisely, John. But now we must get rid of the nig."

"Ugh! Yes. So John say."

"We can't leave the girl in yonder room much longer or she will get chilled to death. A strong man might stand it in there for a day, but not a gal like Ruth."

"What do wid nig, eh? Kill him?"

"No. You are too ready to kill. Look out, John, or some day it will be found out that you are one of the demons of the Minnesota massacre."

"You only white man that knows that. Maybe you think you tell to get reward great father at Washington offered for capture of John, as his 'talking paper' said."

The Indian frowned fiercely.

"No, John. I'm your true friend."

"Ugh! So say. John sometimes think not."

"Hah! I'll stick to you like a brother, John. Why, I'm a-goin' to dwell with your people after this. But about the nig. We will manage to pick a quarrel with him and send him out. Drive him away into the storm. If he should find out Ruth was here he might try to make us trouble, or, at all events, go and tell her friends."

"Good!" said John.

"Go and kick the nig, and then accuse him of comin' here to play spy on us fer the 'Citizens Committee' of Miletown, who wanted to get hold of us all summer."

"Ugh! That will do to start fight," assented Big John.

Then he started to cross to the fireside. But all at once he paused, and Giles uttered an exclamation of alarm. Both at that instant heard a sound that startled them. It was the barking of a dog. Giles went to the window, and the Indian sprang back to his side. Both gazed out into the storm which was now commencing in earnest once more. Giles and Big John presently indistinctly discerned the dog they had heard barking as the animal was making his way in the blizzard. Big John recognized the dog. He had often worked at odd jobs for Tom Bentley's father in Miletown, and he had made friends with Tom's great St. Bernard dog. It was that noble animal now on his way to the snow-bound schoolboys that was coming. The Indian sought to draw the dog to the cabin, though why he did so Giles did not know until the Indian whispered:

"Me see small cask on dog. 'Spec' dat full of rum. Last winter Tom sent out that dog in snow-storm with little cask good rum on his neck to find traveler lost on the divide."

The Indian called the dog. The animal heard a familiar voice, and quite naturally came bounding to the cabin. The dog was admitted. Then Big John closed the door, and as he made friends with the animal he tried to take the cask containing food and a message for the snow-bound schoolboys off the dog's neck. But now the intelligent animal showed fight and snarled. He seemed to understand that the cask was for his

young master and that the Indian had no right to it. Such instances of the rare intelligence of the well-trained St. Bernard life-saving dogs are well authenticated. The Indian got mad at once.

"Me kill dog if bite me!" he said, and he made another attempt to get the cask.

The next instant the dog leaped at the Indian's throat. Down he went on the floor, and a tussle followed between him and the dog.

"Kill the dog! Ugh! Kill him!" cried Big John.

Zeb wanted to save the noble dog. But he had no weapon, and that consideration for a moment restrained him. While he hesitated, Giles clubbed his gun and struck the dog on the head.

The blow stunned the noble fellow, and Big John tore the cask from his neck and opened it. The note written by Tom's father fell out, and Giles picked it up and read it. Then he understood all.

"The boys who didn't get home last night are supposed to be at the school-house. Frank Overton is one of 'em, and so is Tom Bentley. This dog is sent to carry the food and this note to the boys. It shall never get there. Let the boys die in the school-house, since Frank Overton is among them," said Giles.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Last Morsel of Food Gone.

"The dog ain't dead yet, and it will soon be all right again. We will drag him into the rear room," said Giles.

"What do with dog there?" asked Big John.

"Keep him shut up."

"Good!" grunted the Indian.

Then the two dragged the dog into the apartment where Ruth was and closed the door when they came out. Zeb now roused up. He thought it would not seem natural to remain asleep longer, or feign to do so, for so much noise had been made that any sleeper would have been awakened by this time. Zeb rubbed his eyes, yawned, and said sleepily:

"I done dream dat I heard a dog bark. 'Specs dat I was coon-huntin' in my sleep. Gollie, I'se 'bout done out sure!"

"Nigger," said Giles, "I reckon you've stayed here about long enough."

"Yes. Ugh! Nigger man no good. Him come play spy on we. Him go tell men at the village John and Giles come back. Nigger got to go now," said Big John. He spoke threateningly, had his hand on his knife and pointed at the door.

"You ain't a-goin' ter bar dis po' colored individual outen de game dis way, is yer? You doan mean ter dribe me out inter de blizzard, I'se most suah. Why, dat would be cruel, jis' like murder. I shall die in de cold storm if you dribe me out," said Zeb, pathetically.

"Niggers are tough. You have got to take your chances. You can't stay here. Now git and call yourself lucky to get away with a whole skin," said Giles.

The Indian now pointed his gun at Zeb, and ordered fiercely:

"No go quick, John shoot."

Poor Zeb uttered a groan and then he passed

out into the now furiously raging storm, and the clouds of driving snow swallowed him up and hid him from the sight of the two miscreants in a moment.

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Frank Overton was determined that his comrades should not devour the food he had found under the schoolhouse floor, and he gained his point after a hot discussion. Frank now was appointed as captain to so dispose of the food among the snow-bound youths as would make it go the furthest. When the storm ceased and they opened the door the snow was way above their heads. The door was shut and a discussion took place as to the advisability of tunneling their way out. In the end some of the boys banded together to steal the food which was locked in the closet. That night Frank caught Ben Kidd opening the closet door. Frank, who just woke from a sound sleep, jumped for him. Frank soon overcame him and then Dick Carpenter came to the rescue of Ben. Then all the boys jumped in to help Frank, with the result that Ben and Dick were soon subdued. Then the food was removed and Ben and Dick were locked in the closet. The next morning the work on the tunnel was pushed along. About ten feet was finished when suddenly a great cave-in occurred behind them. The boys were buried alive in the snow.

"We are in a tight place, but we must not give up. A wall of ten feet of solid snow to penetrate must not discourage us."

Thus said Frank. He spoke hopefully. It was his idea that the other boys would at once dig toward them.

"Let's shout!" said Tom, and then the two boys lifted their voices and shouted with all their might.

The sound was muffled, owing to their confined situation. They fancied they heard an answer. Then they set to work to dig for the school-house door. They worked fast. The snow which they excavated they heaped behind them in the open space of about three feet. But this was quickly filled. Meanwhile thrilling episodes were taking place in the school-house. The fall of the snow tunnel had just taken place, and the boys remaining in the school-house, having recovered to some degree from the consternation which the accident occasioned them, were just about to set to work to dig Frank and Tom out, when all at once Ben Kidd appeared behind them. The young villain had managed to force the door of the closet in which he had been locked up. He had made his escape from confinement at a most inopportune time for Frank and Tom. The other boys were filled with alarm at the sight of Ben Kidd. They all feared his vengeance.

Particularly was Carpenter, Kidd's former crony alarmed. He dodged by Ben, retreated to the schoolhouse, and when no one was looking, crawled under the floor and hid himself. From the conversation of the boys, which he had overheard before making his presence known, Kidd knew what had happened. He looked exultant as he cried:

"So Frank Overton and Tom Bentley are caught in the snow. I'm glad of it. You fellows have got to stop trying to get them out or I'll

thrash you. Get away into the schoolhouse, I say."

The boys were too much intimidated to think of disobeying Ben Kidd. They dropped the implements with which they were digging toward the boys who were buried in the tunnel. Then they retreated as Kidd had commanded.

"Let 'em stay in the snow. It's good enough for 'em, I say. Now I'm going to get even with all you fellers. You all turned against me and sided with Frank Overton and Tom Bentley. Now you'll find out Ben Kidd ain't to be trifled with. You think so much of Frank and Tom you can stay here with 'em; as for me, I'm going to leave."

Thus speaking, Ben Kidd strode into a corner where the bag of provisions was now kept. All the food that remained to the snow-bound boys was in the bag, as Kidd knew. He lifted the bag upon his shoulders and secured it there. Then he tore up a bench seat and with it and the bag began to ascend to the roof of the school-house. Then the full purport of his movements dawned upon the boys. Kidd was about to leave them and take away with him their last morsel of food. The boys were for the nonce speechless with alarm. They knew that Ben Kidd meant to leave them to starve. Suddenly Joe Samson found voice to call out desperately:

"For heaven's sake, Ben, don't take away all our food and leave us to starve. Leave a part of it at least."

"Look to your noble captain to get you out of this scrape. You have so much faith in him you ought not to worry. I'm off with all the grub."

Thus replied Ben Kidd sneeringly, and a moment or so subsequently he used the bench seat as a sled and went down the frozen crust of the great drifts about the school-house from the roof of the building. Joe Samson gained the roof a moment after Kidd started on his terribly dangerous venture. There was a lull in the blizzard. Joe watched Kidd until he disappeared at the foot of the second great drift. At that moment the gale sprang up in awful fury again and Joe retreated through the hole in the roof, and as he did so he heard an awful scream which he knew was uttered by Ben Kidd. Joe at once led the boys to the task of digging for Frank and Tom. In a short time the two lads were rescued and the tunnel opened again. Frank and Tom were at once informed of the flight of Ben Kidd. When they knew that the wretched boy had fled and left them without a morsel of food the boys' hearts sank. But they concealed their despair, and went bravely to work digging to the woodshed. They had almost completed the tunnel to the woodshed, when suddenly they heard a voice which seemed to emanate from the shed. The snow-bound boys were on the eve of a thrilling discovery.

CHAPTER IX.—Zeb Returns to the Cabin.

The icy blast beat upon poor Zeb, the fine, powdered snow came in contact with his face furiously, cutting, smarting, blinding, suffocating. But as we know, though, Giles Arkhart and Big John, the Indian, had driven him out of the cabin into the blizzard to perish Zeb did not mean

to die. The black man's heart was white, and he felt that he must live to save Ruth Vanwent. And Zeb had courage. His plans were formed, and he wheeled about the instant the blinding snow cloud environed him and shut him out from the sight of the evil, merciless wretches who had sent him out into the mad storm. Zeb was powerful else he would have been beaten down. But he fought for his life, and battled against the blast, making his way back to the cabin. More than once he was almost prostrated in the snow, more than once the gale took away his breath. But he struggled on sustained by two more powerful motives, that of self-preservation and the desire to rescue Ruth. A terrific blast of the winter tornado all at once swept over the brave colored man. He staggered, stretched out his hands and fell at last.

But he fell to rise again. His hands grasped the windowsill of the cabin as he went down. He regained his feet, panting, breathless, chilled, almost ready to perish. Then he knew he had accomplished his purpose and gained the window of the rear room where Giles Arkhart and the Indian had placed Ruth and the noble St. Bernard dog they had wounded. Zeb raised the sash. All was darkness in the rear room. The door leading to the kitchen was closed. A faint ray of firelight flickered under it from the blaze on the hearth beyond. The tumultuous voices of the storm-lashed day wailed a chorus that drowned any sound Zeb made and he crept into the room. After Zeb gained the interior of the room he shut the window, but not before the wind had dashed the snow within. Zeb was in fear lest he had been heard, and he sought immediate concealment. He saw that Ruth was no longer in the room, but the faithful St. Bernard dog was yet there. The rascals had chained the animal to a doorknob. Zeb crept into a small closet. The atmosphere was chill, but as the villains in the adjoining room kept up a rousing fire, Zeb did not think he would freeze. But he knew he would be compelled to remain hidden for some time.

"I'se got ter done wait fur night. Den I'se gwine to drop inter de game, an' play for a lead. I reckon if I kin take de fust trick, while the white trash sleep, I kin win the hull pot," said Zeb to himself in characteristic language, when he was ensconced in the closet of the interior room. Meanwhile, when Zeb had disappeared in the storm, Giles Arkhart and the Indian rejoiced.

"We are well rid of him," said Giles, after some other remarks.

"Ugh, nigger freeze," grunted Big John, laconically.

"And now we must not leave the gal in the rear room any longer, for we don't want her to freeze, too."

"No. Bring gal out."

"I shall do so at once," rejoined Giles Arkhart, and he then led Ruth forth from the apartment in which she had been concealed.

Ruth came to the fire shivering. She was thoroughly chilled. But she was so indignant at the merciless cruelty of her captors in driving poor Zeb out into the storm that the first words she uttered referred to the colored man.

"Inhuman wretches, your conduct has been cowardly and cruel. You have driven a fellow-

man to his death, but God will punish you as you deserve," said Ruth.

"The nigger was interfering with our plans. We don't stand none o' that. You want to talk mild and civil, gal. Recollect you are in our power," said Arkhart, frowning.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, approvingly.

Ruth shuddered at the sound of his guttural voice. Now that she knew who and what Big John really was, Ruth felt the greatest horror of him. She had heard all that passed in the kitchen since Zeb's arrival. She knew the dog, and she understood he had been sent to carry food and a message to Frank Overton and the snow-bound boys who were his comrades at the cross-roads school-house. The girl's heart was full of fear lest the detention of the dog should doom Frank and his young comrades if they were yet alive. She implored Arkhart to replace the little cask about the neck of the dog, and permit the noble animal to complete his mission as a life-saver. But Arkhart only sneered.

"Let young Overton perish. I'm not the sort to send succor to a rival."

Ruth saw that supplication and entreaty were useless. She became silent and gazed into the red flames as they leaped and flickered on the hearth, as though she sought to read her destiny therein. She wondered almost hopelessly how all the dreadful experience she was enduring was to end, and then she prayed silently for Frank and all who were in peril by reason of the great storm. Presently the low voices of Arkhart and Big John took her attention. She heard the Indian say:

"If boys at school find Injun's grub they eat. Keep alive maybe some time."

Giles assented. Ruth felt then that there was yet hope for the snow-bound boys. The hours of the dreary day went by slowly. The night, however, came at last as was the course of nature. Meanwhile Zeb was terribly chilled, but when night fell Zeb became alert and eager. He meant now to take advantage of circumstances. He hoped the chance he wanted might come, and that the Indians and Giles Arkhart might sleep. He thought they might naturally do so without fearing that Ruth would try to escape, since it would be death for her to venture out into the storm. The night advanced. Midnight came, and for some time silence had reigned in the cabin. Zeb stole out of the closet and crept to the kitchen door. Then he listened an instant, and then opened it. He saw Ruth asleep by the fire. At a short distance were the recumbent forms of Giles Arkhart and Big John. Both were wrapped in their blankets, and seemed to be sleeping. Zeb now meant to steal out and knock the Indian senseless while he slept, and then overpower Giles Arkhart. He cautiously opened the door. It creaked on its hinges, and Giles Arkhart started up and turned to the door.

Quickly Zeb drew back and closed the door. But Giles thought that he heard a noise behind the door and opened it and passed through. The instant he did so Zeb brought a club down upon his head and he fell insensible. Big John heard the fall of Giles and went to find out what was the matter. He was served the same way. Then Zeb found Ruth. She was delighted to see her old friend. Zeb now bound the two villains. Then

the negro and Ruth tied the cask around the dog's neck and let him out of the cabin.

CHAPTER X.—Fire!—James Worthington's Revelation.

"Hello!" Frank shouted as the voice was heard again in the woodshed. "We hear you and will soon reach you."

"Good!" returned the voice.

When they reached the woodshed door it was opened and a man well advanced in years stood in the doorway. The man said he was on the way to Miletown when the storm overtook him and his horse gave out. He had a fire going inside and a pair of saddle bags lay on the floor. He said his name was James Worthington, and he was on his way to see an old friend. Mr. Worthington suggested that they all retreat to the schoolhouse, which was now done. When they arrived there the man asked if any stranger had arrived in Miletown recently.

"Yes, an unknown old man, who was left for dead on the road by robbers," said Frank.

"Heavens! It must be that man was my old friend David Overton," said Worthington.

Frank Overton, as he stood spellbound by James Worthington's last words, saw a dense cloud of black smoke pouring down the opening leading to the attic. The succeeding moment he saw the flash of red flames in the attic.

"Fire—fire! The school-house is on fire!" cried Frank.

This was the terrible calamity which came upon the snow-bound boys. But the fire had not gained much headway, and there was plenty snow at hand with which to extinguish it. In a moment the boys were at work. Their prompt efforts were successful, and soon the fire was put out. So the terrible calamity which came upon them was not serious in its results. The fire had caught from the stove-pipe, and precautions were taken to guard against the danger in future. Frank Overton had for a moment been unable to restrain his agitation when he heard James Worthington, the stranger whom the snow-bound boys had discovered in the school-house woodshed, speak of the unknown man who had been wounded unto death by Giles Arkhart and Big John, the vagabond Indian. After the fire the conversation was resumed.

"Yes," said Worthington with emotion which he made no effort to conceal, "the unfortunate victim of the dark tragedy upon the highway was surely my old friend David Overton."

"That was my father's name. But I believed he lost his life in the Black Hills when I was a mere infant," Frank found voice to utter, tremulously.

Worthington started, and then for an instant he regarded Frank with a keen and searching glance, as though he sought to discern some peculiarity in his face.

"It must be that you are really David Overton's son," he said presently, while his tone expressed conviction.

Frank for a moment covered his face with his hands. He was confused. His brain whirled, because of the mental shock the startling revelation

caused him. He found it difficult to think lucidly or to say what he wished to. It all seemed unreal. He was inclined to think he might be the victim of a hallucination.

"Yes, yes, my lad," continued Worthington, understanding the boy's emotion. "David Overton was your own father. Without knowing it you met the father who had not seen you since you were an infant in the person of the stranger who died at Miletown."

"Are you sure of this? Is it a positive certainty that there is no error?" asked the boy, finally.

"I am positive. When I met David Overton in Sioux City as I did he told me he was on his way to Miletown to see his son Frank, who resided there with one Cuthbert. Your name is Frank. You strikingly resemble your father. There is no error."

"No, no. Oh, to think that I sat beside the deathbed of my own father and never knew him."

"Tell me the whole story."

"I will do so."

While James Worthington listened eagerly and with absorbing interest, Frank told how he had found David Overton, the unknown, and all that subsequently occurred. He did not omit, of course, to tell of the attempt made by the dying man, just before his death, to make some communication, and he related how the unfortunate one had succeeded in making him comprehend that there was something in the treasure-belt which he, David Overton, wished to give Frank.

"And yet," said Frank, "when I searched the treasure-belt it was empty."

"Ah, and you say the fiends who struck your father down did not have time to rob him before they were surprised."

"Scarcely so. They may have felt his money-belt and thought it empty."

"Was any suspicious character left alone with your father after he was brought to Cuthbert's house?"

"No—but say! There was one man who called and was alone at the bedside of my poor father for a few moments."

"Oh, I thought so."

"But that man stands as an honest character, though he is a hard, shrewd money-lender."

"His name."

"Luke Grindle."

"Luke Grindle! Ah, now my suspicions assume the form of a conviction—of a certainty."

"What do you mean? Do you think Grindle could have taken something from my father's money-belt?"

"Yes, my boy."

"I never supposed Luke Grindle would descend to steal, though I knew him to be a hard man in his dealings with his debtors."

"Frank, your father, when I met him in Sioux City, after many years, showed me the sum of twenty thousand dollars in gold, which he said was a little fortune he had accumulated in the mines for you."

"Twenty thousand dollars in gold and for me!" exclaimed Frank.

"Yes," replied Worthington, smiling at the lad's astonishment.

"Your father carried the twenty thousand dollars on his person in his large treasure belt,

and you may well suppose it was a burden of weight."

"Do you think my father carried all that gold when he set out to come to Miletown?"

"No. I advised him to deposit it in some bank in Sioux City, and I am now inclined to think that he took my advice."

"Then what could have been in the treasure belt?"

"I have been thinking of that point and I have concluded that, had he deposited the gold, your father would naturally have carried the certificate of deposit, which would enable him to reclaim his gold, in the safest place possible."

"Then you think that he had the certificate of deposit in his treasure belt?"

"Yes, and more than that. I believe that Luke Grindle stole that paper when he was left alone at your father's bedside. I see you think that a bold accusation, but I will tell you why I make it."

"Yes, yes, explain everything, please."

"I know Luke Grindle of old. In other days he was a villain and your father's mortal enemy. Grindle hated David Overton because the latter was his successful rival for the hand of your mother. Grindle would not hesitate to perpetrate a robbery if he thought that he would not be found out."

"I begin to think you are right. But how will the possession of my father's certificate profit Grindle, granted that he has it. Will not the bank require that he identify himself as David Overton if he presents the certificate for identification?"

"No, for in case of strangers, who have no one to identify them, the bank takes a description of the person, as the police do of criminals to guard against errors. The description is written down in a book with the signature of the depositor. This is a peculiar feature of far west banking business, which was originated to meet the requirements of the gold digging in the days of the great rush of strangers for the Black Hills."

"Then it is possible Grindle may attempt to personate my father at the Sioux City bank, present the certificate of deposit, and claim the money?"

"Yes."

"The scoundrel."

There was some further conversation, and Frank asked:

"Do you know the reason of my father's long absence, or why he permitted his family to think he was dead?"

"In what way?"

"I think that through the machination of Luke Grindle, who years ago vowed vengeance upon your father, he was led to believe his wife, your mother, was dead, and that you perished with her at the time of the last Sioux war."

"Ah, what a cruel desception, indeed."

"Accidentally David discovered that his son—yourself—yet lived, and then he lost no time in seeking you."

"Poor father," said Frank, sadly. "Yours was a hard fate."

Then with a sudden burst of just indignation:

"But if I live to escape from this snow-bound prison Luke Grindle and my father's assassin shall be punished."

"Well said, my boy. I pledge myself to help you in the work of retribution," said Worthington, and he grasped the schoolboy's hand warmly.

"Once we escape hence the mystery of my father's money-belt shall surely be solved," continued Frank, earnestly.

At this point the conversation was interrupted. To the ears of the snow-bound inmates of the school-house came the sound of a barking dog. All listened for a moment breathlessly. Then a glad shout emanated from the lips of Tom Bentley.

"My noble St. Bernard!" he shouted.

The sound of the dog came from overheard, and the lad knew the dog had reached the roof over the drift that reached to it. He sprang up the ladder and opened the door in the roof. A moment and the boy and the dog which had been at last sent forward on his way by Zeb and Ruth were down in the school-room.

CHAPTER XI.—The Avalanche.

The snow-bound schoolboys were rejoiced at the coming of Tom's dog, not only on account of the relief the incident gave them, as it released them from the oppressing thought that they were buried alive in the snow, since a living creature had succeeded in reaching them; but also because they thought men might be following the dog. Tom was almost overpowered by the delighted antics of the great dog, but he quieted him finally. All had at once observed the small cask secured about the neck of the dog, and they were eager and anxious to find out what it contained. Tom quickly released the cask from the collar of the dog, and then he opened it. The first thing he saw was the letter Ruth had written, and he handed the penciled note to Frank—to whom it was addressed. Under Frank's letter Tom found the note written by his father and he read it aloud. The boys were consoled and gladdened by the cheerful tone of the note, though they were bitterly disappointed as well, when they knew that as yet no rescue party could face the storm to rescue them. The food in the cask was a Godsend. The cask was packed with preserved meat, such as always form an important portion of the supplies of Arctic explorers. This meat generates animal heat, and is of course invaluable as an article of diet in a cold climate.

"I must hasten to comply with my father's request and send back a message by my dog," said Tom, when the contents of the cask had been duly examined.

So he went to his desk, and upon a blank page of his copybook he hastily wrote a letter to his father. In this letter Tom told how the boys were situated and that they were still hopeful. While Tom was engaged in writing, Frank, who had read Ruth's note with mingled emotions of the most painful character, drew Mr. Worthington aside, and after some explanation regarding Ruth Vanwert, said:

"And now Ruth's note tells me that she and Mr. Cuthbert's colored man, while on the way to warn me that Luke Grindle had sent Big John, the vagabond Indian, and Giles Arkhart to am-

bush me as I returned from school were overtaken by the blizzard."

Then Frank went on and told his new friend of the present situation of Ruth and Zeb, for in her note Ruth had assured Frank that Zeb had finally outwitted the enemy, and made the two rascals captives. When Frank had concluded, Mr. Worthington said:

"Ruth Vanwert is a noble girl, and Zeb is a colored hero. But they are in peril yet. Suppose the villains with whom the girl and the darky are snow-bound should again turn the tables on them?"

"I dare not think what might then happen."

"Surely they could expect no mercy?"

"No."

"Is not the cabin in which Ruth and Zeb sought shelter near the village than this school-house?"

"Oh, yes," replied Frank.

"Then, while a rescue party may not as yet be able to reach us, if the peril of Ruth at the cabin was known to the villagers an attempt might be made by the townsmen to reach the deserted cabin."

"Yes."

"And we can send the news of Ruth Vanwert's peril to the village."

"So we can. Tom is now writing. I must see that he implores the men of Miletown to go to Ruth's rescue without delay."

Thus speaking, Frank hastened to Tom and read him Ruth's letter, and Tom wrote as Frank dictated, telling of the dreadful situation of Ruth and Zeb snow-bound with two assassins, and asking that a rescue party be sent at once. As soon as the letter was completed the missive was secured in a packet on the dog's collar. Then the animal was taken to the roof and went away. Down the steep drift the dog bounded, and the boys were pleased to see that he took an almost direct course toward the village of Miletown.

"The noble dog will prove a faithful messenger for me, I am sure. He will carry my letter safely to the village, and its reception will relieve the anxiety of our friends and parents," said Tom.

"And it is my earnest hope that the appeal made in your letter on Ruth's behalf may result in her rescue," replied Frank.

"So I trust," assented Tom.

* * * * *

Night came again, and around the stove in the center of the school-room slept the snow-bounds and their grown companions, James Worthington. Toward morning all were awakened. A terrible roaring, crashing sound came from the mountains against which the school-house stood. All present knew the meaning of that sound. They were aware that the snow on the slope was in motion, and that the alarming sounds they heard were caused by the progress of the avalanche, as rocks and trees were caught up and hurled along with the snow. The faces of the little party in the school-house became white with terror. They held their breath and listened in awful suspense. It was a dreadful situation. They knew the avalanche was rushing down upon the snow-bound school-house, but they could not escape it. The school-house presently trembled and shook as though an earthquake had come. The thundering sound of rushing objects seemed

to pass over the roof, and the prisoners of the school-house expected each moment that the weight of the snow would crush in the building. But suddenly the stillness of the grave settled down upon it, and yet the house stood. James Worthington was the first one to speak after the awful silence which succeeded the descent of the avalanche came.

"The school-house is buried under an avalanche!" said he. "And the only wonder is it was not flattened to the earth, and that we are yet alive. It is the mercy of God."

Frank Overton crept to the door and tried to open it, but he could not do so, and then all knew that the avalanche had crushed down and filled the tunnel leading to the wood-shed. All the boys were thankful that they had taken the precaution to bring all the fuel into the school-house while the tunnel remained intact. But the boys now completely lost heart, and Tom Bentley said despairingly:

"Now, indeed, the worst possible calamity short of actual death has befallen us. We are doubly buried alive under the snow."

They ascended to the roof, but found that the snow was so deep there they could not get the door open. Then they began a tunnel from the school-house door. Suddenly Tom beat a hasty retreat into the room. A great dark object followed him. It was a full-grown bear. The animal was hungry and ferocious. Mr. Worthington had a revolver and fired. But he missed, and the bear turned on him.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Darkest Hour the Snow-Bound Boys Had Known Comes.

The dog-messenger—Tom Bentley's intelligent St. Bernard—meanwhile, after leaving the school-house with the message from the snow-bound schoolboys in the pocket of his collar, made straight for the village. Meantime the people there, and particularly Tom Bentley's father and the parents of the other snow-bound boys, had almost abandoned all hope of ever seeing the noble dog alive again. The solicitude and anxiety of all had become intensified as the time elapsed, and yet the dog did not return. But all this we have alluded to, and so we will not dwell upon it longer. At the house of the good minister all the parents of the missing schoolboys and several others, including old Si Monday, were assembled, discussing the situation at the time when the dog left the school-house.

"I kinder reckon the dog hez gone under, same as Ginerl Georgie's dog Pont went under, when we wuz a-crossin' ther Delaware in ther time o' ther Revolutionary War. Ginerl Georgie sot great store by ther purp, 'cause I stole him from the British ginerl, Clinton an'——"

Old Si Monday was setting in to relate a long yarn, when there came a sudden interruption.

The minister's boy burst into the house, breathless with excitement.

"What is it, Samuel, my son?" asked the old minister, as the boy stammered but did not express what he evidently wished to say.

"The—the—dog has come back!" uttered the boy at last.

"Hurrah! Hurrah for ther purp an' Ginerall Georgie!" piped old Si Monday, shrilly, and he thumped the floor with his cane in enthusiastic delight.

Mr. Bentley, Tom's father, sprang up at once, saying:

"Where is the dog, Sam?"

"At your house, sir," replied the boy.

The residence of Mr. Bentley was at but a short distance, and at once the party hastened there. The dog was in the house and Mrs. Bentley had already ready Tom's message, and there were tears of joy in the fond mother's eyes as she handed the note to her husband. Mr. Bentley read the letter aloud, while all present listened with rapt attention. When Mr. Bentley read that portion of the letter which told of Ruth Vanwert's peril at the lone cabin old Si Monday piped in his shrill old cracked voice:

"Gimme my gun that I kerried at Bunker Hill, when we made the redcoats run, an' Ginerall Georgie was kingbee, an' I'll march ye out ter resker the gal, by ther bagonets o' the Hessians, I wull."

Mr. Bentley smiled approval upon old Si, and he said:

"Friends, though the storm has not ceased, its violence has moderated to some degree. Now, while it is not possible to reach the school-house as yet, where, by the mercy of God, our boys are still well and safe from the storm, it is possible, I think for a party of resolute men to make their way to the lone cabin in which Ruth Vanwert and honest Zeb, the colored man, are snow-bound with the two evil characters who were driven from the village."

"Yes," responded the aged minister, "my worthy friends, an effort must be made to get at the lone cabin."

"Who will volunteer?" cried Mr. Bentley. "I agree to lead the party."

"Count onto old Si Monday, who fit into the revolution an' counts hisself the oldest man in Dakota, by bagonets!" piped old Si.

"And count on me," said another and another, until eight men had volunteered to join the rescue party.

"No time must now be lost," said Mr. Bentley, and the others, understanding fully the urgent need for haste, quickly made their preparations and set out for the lone cabin.

Old Si Monday insisted upon accompanying the party, though they tried to dissuade him. The tough old veteran trudged along at the heels of the party with his old blunderbus on his shoulder.

* * * * *

Returning now to the boys, we recall the scene at the schoolhouse. Mr. Worthington lay stunned where he had fallen hit by the bear's paws. The pistol he had discharged at the bear without result was clutched in his hand. The bear was making straight for Worthington, and Frank Overton with his pocket-knife in his right hand and his coat on his left arm was stealing forward in the hope of securing Worthington's pistol before the bear reached the latter. Frank was successful. He drew the revolver out of Mr. Worthington's hand and took careful aim at the bear. Seeing Frank, the animal reared on his hind legs and uttered a fierce growl. As the

ominous roar of the bear echoed through the school-room, Frank discharged his weapon and sent a ball through one of the bear's eyes into his brain, causing death. Mr. Worthington came to and saw the bear dead on the floor, while Frank stood over the animal with the smoking revolver in his hand. The boys in the loft uttered joyful cries and came down the ladder quickly. Mr. Worthington was all right in a few moments and he praised Frank's bravery warmly. Presently Frank said curiously:

"I can't understand how we came to find the bear under the snow."

"I presume you mined to some retreat where he had sought refuge before the storm," said Mr. Worthington.

Then he and Frank went into the snow tunnel, and at the end of it they found a ledge of rocks, under which were the indications that there the bear had made its nest when the storm came up. But there were two sets of bear tracks found, so they knew more than one bear had been there. What had become of the second bear, however, they could not tell. The dead bear was dressed and the boys had broiled bear steaks for the next meal, and they congratulated themselves that the bear meat would keep them alive for some time. Next day the last morsel of the food brought by the dog was eaten. Now the boys had no food to depend on save the bear meat. The succeeding night came, and having secured the door, the boys and Mr. Worthington slept. What was their surprise, on awakening, to find the school-house door open and the bear meat gone. There were bear tracks which told that one of those animals had forced open the door during the night and carried off the bear meat. Now there was not a scrap of food on hand. The boys were terrified at the prospect ahead, but Mr. Worthington, Frank and Tom set out to track the four-footed thief. The trail led to the end of the tunnel, and then disappeared among some loosely heaped treetops that were piled about, as they judged, over a considerable space. The snow-bound ones tried to penetrate among the tangled treetops, but they were soon compelled to give up the attempt, and they returned to the school-house. Then as the hours went by all suffered the pangs of hunger, and the black shadow of despair settled upon all their hearts. They looked into each other's faces hopelessly. The darkest hour the boys had known yet had now come.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Shadow of Famine.

The snow-bound schoolboys were not long in deciding that the bear meat upon which they had depended for food was lost beyond all chance of recovery. They thus concluded, knowing that the thief must have been the bear yet alive, the tracks of which they had discovered and which had disappeared amid the snow-covered trees that had been brought down by the avalanche. We have said that the darkest hour the boys had yet known had now come, and this was certainly true.

Being now entirely without food, it seemed that their doom was only a question of time. The gaunt dread shadow of famine cast its shade upon the boys and all felt its presence. Mr.

Worthington made an approximate estimate of the distance through which it would be necessary to tunnel before the boys could escape and his last faint hope of success as the ultimatum of the captives' efforts was then swept away. The gentleman felt that the strength of all would fail and that famine would drag them down as victims before they had traversed the snow-walls of their strange prison-place. But brooding in such a situation, as Mr. Worthington well knew, only tended to make despair the more terrible, and the attended torture more unendurable. He resolved, therefore, to keep the boys at work at the tunnel, even though he privately regarded the task as well-nigh useless. Forcing himself to assume a cheerful voice and an expression of countenance which masked the true sentiment by which he was actuated, Mr. Worthington addressed the despairing schoolboys thus:

"My lads," said he, "we have nothing left to eat. That is quite true, but folks live a long time without food, if they can only keep up their courage. Now, I've an idea it would be cowardly to give up while there is a yet a chance that we may dig our way through the drift. Don't you think we ought to keep to work at the tunnel?"

"Yes, yes! By all means let us continue the work of tunneling. Who knows, we may get through the drifts sooner than we suppose, and by this time the storm may be over, and for all we know our parents and our friends from the village are by this time digging for us," said Frank.

He was eager to catch the ray of hope which Mr. Worthington's assumed cheerfulness inspired him with. The other boys were inclined to think as their young leader did, and Tom Bentley said:

"I move, boys, that we start in and work at the tunnel again. We won't think about eating, and then maybe we shall not feel hunger so much for a while. Who knows but we can stand a long fast as well as that old crank, Dr. Tanner, who wouldn't eat when he could."

Tom's remarks evoked a merry laugh from one of the boys, who was too young to, as yet, fairly realize that they were all, so as to say, almost face to face with starvation. The little fellow's mirth proved infectious. The others laughed, and for the moment at least the boys' spirits rose. Taking advantage of their mood, Mr. Worthington and Frank led the way through the door of the school-house into the snow tunnel. The boys followed. All set to work. The labor was systematically divided. While two or three dug, others carried back the snow. The laborers exchanged places from time to time. All worked cheerfully and intelligently. The tunnel seemed to advance more rapidly than ever, and Mr. Worthington kept up a cheerful conversation all the time, so as not to give the boys a chance for much reflection. Night came again as they knew by Mr. Worthington's watch. Then the boys were divided into relief squads for the work. While one party slept a certain time the other squad worked and then they changed off. This was to make all the progress in the tunnel possible while their strength held out. The night passed, and in the outer world it was day again, still the boys labored on. They were very hungry now, and as the day wore on some of them com-

plained that they felt weak and staggered out of the tunnel into the school-house and lay down to rest. Want of food was telling on the boys, and the younger and weaker ones were the first to fail and abandon work in the snow tunnel.

But Frank Overton and Tom Bentley kept up wonderfully. Both were sturdy boys, and capable of much endurance, and then, too, they were sustained by the exertion of will power. Both had resolved that they would cling to life with stubborn tenacity, and only yield when nature could no longer stand the awful strain. Mr. Worthington regarded the two young heroes with admiration, and his head was very sad as he feared that the two brave spirits must perish in the end. But still, so is man constituted, the schoolboys would not surrender the last ray of hope, and so they did not become utterly prostrated by despair even yet, though physically weak and ill. Mr. Worthington, Frank Overton, and Tom Bentley worked in the tunnel, steadily mining toward life and freedom from the snow-walled prison, while the others slept, or lay about the fire in the school-room in a semi-stupor. But now, gradually, the heroic trio, as many hours went by, found that they were slowly growing weaker and weaker. They had spells of faintness, a terrible empty, gnawing sensation at the stomach, a dizziness of the head, and a general sensation of illness stole upon them, and they understood that they were experiencing the first tortures of starvation. Finally poor Tom sank down in the tunnel.

"It's no use. Help me back to the school-house, I can do no more," the boy murmured faintly.

Frank knelt beside his comrade, but all at once everything turned black before his eyes. He fell across Tom's body in a faint. Mr. Worthington uttered a groan and cried aloud in agony of soul—"Oh, God, have mercy!"

CHAPTER XV.—Big John and Zeb.

Back at the cabin with Ruth and Zeb the outlaw Arkhart had succeeded in freeing his hands from his bonds and gained his feet. Then he proceeded to set Big John free. Zeb and Ruth slept on. Ruth was suddenly awakened from a horrible dream in which the outlaws figured, and as she awoke she gave a slight scream. She saw the outlaws about to spring on Zeb. Seizing a burning brand from the fireplace she hurled it in the face of the Indian and Zeb snatched his gun. Big John, in terrible pain from the burning brand, fled from the cabin. Then shouts were heard without and a band of Sioux Indians swarmed into the cabin. Then Giles Arkhart rose to his feet and fired his revolver at Zeb. The negro uttered a cry and fell; then Giles made a rush for Ruth, but she dashed through the door out into the night.

The storm was over. Still the wind blew strongly. Ruth ran on and on. She knew that the Indians would pursue her. Suddenly her limbs became numb and she collapsed. When she regained her senses she was back at the cabin and in the clutches of the outlaw again. From the talk she heard, when they had come

back to the cabin, Zeb had been found missing. Big John had set out to hunt him up. And while the Indians and Arkhart were waiting to hear from Big John, Zeb was striving to reach Miletown. He had only been slightly wounded by Arkhart's bullet. But now Big John had sighted Zeb, and drew nearer and nearer his prey.

Now quite near his intended victim the outlaw Indian had approached. In one hand he had drawn his long-bladed scalping-knife, possibly the same dreadful weapon with which he had done such awful work in Minnesota during the Sioux war. Still, while the shadow of doom, in the person of Big John, hovered over him, Zeb plodded on. The darky meant to brave all the perils of the night and make his way finally to the village and bring back help to rescue Ruth Vanwert from Giles Arkhart. Presently Big John crept around the end of a great drift, and found himself close upon Zeb. The succeeding instant he made a leap at Zeb's back with his murderous knife raised for a terrible blow directly between Zeb's shoulders. But the night was now light enough to cast shadows. The moon had suddenly peeped out from behind a cloud, and Zeb caught a glimpse of Big John's shadow as it fell, in giant and grotesque shape, upon the white canopy around him, just as he came out from the shelter of the great drift Zeb had passed. As Big John made his desperate leap Zeb sprang aside, and skillfully tripped the Indian by throwing out his foot at precisely the proper instant. Big John plunged headfirst into the snow ahead, and the darky leaped forward and struck him on the head with a club which he had secured after he left the lone cabin. The blow Zeb dealt was a heavy one, and the Indian did not stir after he received it.

"I done played de right bower dat time fo' suah, an' I 'specs dat I hab scored a p'int in dis game for certain," muttered Zeb.

Then he turned the Indian over and felt his heart. It did not beat. There was not even a faint pulsation to be detected. The fact was, Zeb's terrible blow had fractured the skull of the murderous Indian in such a manner as to occasion instant death. Zeb was a naturally kind-hearted man, and he was troubled at the thought that he had caused Big John's death, great villain as he knew the Indian to have been. But Zeb did not long remain beside the dead savage. He paused but a moment, in fact, and then, having decided that the Indian was really dead, he started forward again at a swift pace. He raced forward fully realizing all that depended upon him. The lights of Miletown presently glimmered like stars before his vision in the distance ahead. Then he went on, if possible, even more rapidly than previously. But all at once he halted. He heard a sound near. Zeb listened. Surely he could not be mistaken. He heard the murmur of human voices, and they were near. In a moment Zeb knew that men were coming toward him from the direction of the town, and that a snow-drift only hid them from sight. Then a wild shout emanated from Zeb's lips.

"Hello! Dis way, white folks, if yer want to raise de 'ante' an' see Giles Arkhart's hand in de meanest game dat a white man eber sot in fer to play."

In answer to this a shout returned. A moment

later and Zeb met Mr. Bentley and the party from the village who were on the way to the lone cabin to rescue Ruth and Zeb. An explanation was made by both parties, and then Zeb led the way back toward the cabin he had left.

"This ere night's march 'minds me o' the night we marched ter the Delaware with Ginerol Georgie ter cross ther river on the ice an' 'sprise the redcoats, in ther Revolutionary War what I fit into. Now, boyees, take heed unto ther oldest man in Dakota an' mind what old Si Monday says. In ther words o' Ginerol George, go fer ter surround the inemy an' scoop 'em in all ter onct, like suckers in er net, same as we did in the Revolutionary War at the battle of Bunker Hill," piped the cracked voice of the eccentric veteran as he trudged along in the rear of the others.

"It will certainly be a good plan to follow old Si's advice and surround the lone cabin so as to prevent the escape of Arkhart, if he has not already fled with Ruth," assented Mr. Bentley.

So it was arranged. The party came in sight of the lone cabin in due time. Then they spread out and stealthily approached it from all sides so as to environ the hovel completely.

"Now," whispered Bentley, "we will advance to the door, Zeb."

"All right," the darky assented, and he went forward with Mr. Bentley.

They reached the door. Still silence reigned. Evidently their approach had not been discovered if there was any one in the cabin.

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

The Indians who had arrived at the lone cabin finally decided, as we have intimated, that they would camp there for the night. The party wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down on the floor after a time. But Giles Arkhart remained alert and watchful while he waited anxiously for the return of Big John. So complete was the white outlaw's faith in the Indian that he did not once consider that he would fail in his purpose to kill Zeb. Ruth sat close by the fire, her hands clasped and her whole attitude evincing that she suffered keenly. The poor girl was indeed well-nigh benumbed with horror now. She had gone through so much in the way of excitement and peril that she felt that she could not endure much more. The dull apathy of final despair now began to enthrall Ruth. She could no longer keep up heart and faith in final deliverance.

In her great fear of the Indian assassin, who had taken Zeb's trail, she no longer had any hope that the devoted colored man would escape the redskin. And all Ruth's hopes had been centered upon Zeb's reaching the village and returning with assistance, as we know. The time passed. Finally, as Zeb did not come, Ruth said to herself:

"The Indian has killed the poor fellow and all is now lost. But why does not Big John return if I am right?"

She dare not allow herself to hope more, and she did not answer the final question. But now Giles Arkhart became impatient and somewhat uneasy at the Indian's prolonged absence, and so

he said to the leader of the Indian hunting-party: "You keep an eye on the girl for me, Bald Wolf, and I will go out after Big John."

"All right; Injun watch gal. But you must remember that we are at peace with the whites, and we have nothing to do with your making the white squaw captive. If her friends should come and demand her, because we are at peace with the whites, I will give her up," replied the chief.

"All I want of you is to watch the girl until I come back so she may not rush out into the night where she would freeze before she had gone far. There is no danger of any one coming from the village after her, I am sure," replied Arkhart.

Then he took up his rifle and started out to find Big John. Leaving the cabin, Giles took the trail of his Indian confederate at once. But amid the towering snow-drifts the men, led by Zeb, passed the villain unseen and unheard. When Zeb and his friends arrived at the lone cabin the villainous Arkhart had not yet returned to the lodge. A moment after Zeb and Mr. Bentley arrived at the door of the cabin they demanded admittance, and the door was opened by Bald Wolf, the Indian chief. At the sight of her friends Ruth sprang to them with a glad cry. Mr. Bentley gave a shrill whistle, and all his followers crowded into the cabin and ranged themselves beside him, holding their rifles ready for use. The Indians sprang up, and for a moment it looked as though a desperate fight might ensue. But Bald Wolf was a sensible Indian, and he ordered his followers to fall back, and then in a few words he explained how his band came there with the girl whom he said he was glad to give back to her friends. This explanation was accepted, and Mr. Bentley questioned the chief and Ruth. Then, when he learned that Giles Arkhart might soon return, he asked the Indians to prove their friendship by letting the rascal walk into a trap. The promise of some blankets and ammunition caused the Indians, who had no real love for Arkhart, to accede to this request, and so Bentley, Ruth, Zeb and all the others of the rescue party concealed themselves in the interior room of the cabin.

Presently Arkhart returned. He had found the body of Big John, and he meant now to start for the Indians' home with Ruth at once, fearing Zeb would come to rescue the fair captive. Upon entering the cabin and not seeing Ruth, Arkhart demanded in fierce tones:

"Where is the gal?"

Bald Wolf pointed to the interior room. Arkhart strode into it. But no sooner had he passed the threshold than the muzzle of old Si Monday's gun was thrust in his face, and the eccentric veteran piped shrilly:

"Surrender, ye pizen Hessian! Surrender, ez Ginerel Georgie said to redcoat Cornwallis, er fizz! bang! biff! an' off goes yer head. Ye hear the voice o' ther oldest man in Dakota. Take heed unto ther same."

While old Si spoke, several leaped upon Arkhart, and he was overpowered and bound. The party then returned in safety to the village with the prisoner and the rescued maiden. Ruth became a welcome guest at the house of Mr. Bentley. Arkhart was locked up in the village jail. Then time went by until dawn, and when day

came again the villagers determined upon setting to work to dig to the snow-bound boys despite the cold. Snow-plows were got out, and the work was started, and continued manfully until at last the workers thought they had almost reached the school-house. A great tunnel had been excavated. Mr. Bentley was leading the workers when suddenly he halted and held up his hand to enjoin silence. All listened breathlessly. They heard a voice from the snow. Uniting their voices, they shouted, and Mr. Worthington, whose voice they had heard when he made his frantic prayer for mercy, heard them. He shouted madly and was heard. Then the two boys, Frank and Tom, revived, and half an hour later the men from the village reached them.

What a scene of joy ensued. All the school-boys were yet alive and in sledges, well covered with furs, they were quickly conveyed to the village, Mr. Worthington accompanying them. The meeting between Ruth and Frank was a most joyful one. Some days later Frank and Mr. Worthington proceeded to Sioux City, where the gentleman produced to the officials of the bank the evidences that David Overton was dead, and that Frank was his son and heir. The bank at once transferred the \$20,000 left by the boy's father on deposit to Frank's account. Meanwhile Luke Grindle, through the loss of the certificate of deposit, which he had stolen, had thus far been deterred from making an attempt to obtain Frank's inheritance. He had, however, just completed his plans for personating David Overton, and was about to set out for Sioux City when he heard that Frank knew all, and had secured the inheritance himself.

Since Frank was now in possession of a small fortune Grindle said no more against Ruth's associating with him, and the young lovers are now engaged, and there is no doubt that in a few years they will be happily married. Giles Arkhart will be tried next month for his crimes, and his conviction and punishment are certain. The story of the great blizzard now draws to a close, but we must not conclude it without stating that honest Zeb received a handsome testimonial from the people of the village for his heroic conduct. Mention must also be made of the fact that the body of Ben Kidd, the bully of the school, who ran away with the snow-bound boys' provisions, was found frozen stiff in the snow at no great distance from the school-house some time later.

Our story has placed upon record the adventures of but a few of the vast number of persons who passed through strange and thrilling experience in the great blizzard, but we trust it may have proven as interesting as many of the other narratives recorded in the newspapers throughout the entire land.

Next week's issue will contain "DRIVEN ASHORE IN LOST LATITUDES; or, THE STRANGE STORY OF THE SKELETON ISLAND."

"Well, my little man," inquired a visitor pleasantly, "who are you?" "I'm the baby's brother," was the ingenuous reply.

CURRENT NEWS

DON'T KILL BULLSNAKES

Kansas farmers find that a bullsnake in an alfalfa field is worth at least \$2.50 a month; for an acre harbors, on an average, six gophers, which damage the crop to that extent. One adult bullsnake keeps an acre free of the pests. The bullsnake is harmless, feeds also on rats and mice around the barn or granery, and deserves the protection of the farmer.

36,000,000 IN AMERICA HAVE FOREIGN BLOOD

The number of white residents of the United States on Jan. 1, 1920, who were foreign-born or declared one or both parents foreign-born was 36,398,958, the Department of Commerce announced recently in a compilation of the 1920 census figures. This was an increase in the "foreign white stock" of the nation's population from 1910 of 4,155,576, or 12.9 per cent.

The 1920 total includes 13,713,754 immigrants and 22,686,204 persons born in this country, one or both of whose parents were immigrants.

A STRANGE GROWTH

The most singular forest growth in the world is encountered in the Falkland Islands, a dismal region constantly swept by a strong polar wind. What appears to be weather-worn and moss-cov-

ered boulders are scattered about, and when one of these curious objects is seized in an attempt to overthrow it strong roots are found to hold it down, these "boulders" being, in fact, native trees which the wind has forced to assume this shape. The wood appears to be a twisted mass of fibers almost impossible to cut up into fuel.

ODD FACTS

Some of the safe deposit companies in New York City devote apartments to the exclusive reception of fur garments, fur mats, etc. They are kept in rooms the temperature of which is kept so low that destructive insects and their germs perish from the cold.

Cullman, Ala., claims to be the most prosperous township in the world. It is said that every man in the town who is the head of a family has a clear-title deed of ownership to his home, and every one of them has a banking account. Co-operative farming is practised in the country.

A most unusual sight was seen in Grand Rapids recently when Alice Teddy, the trained bear owned by George Crapsey, of Merrill, passed through the city driving an auto. The bear was as much unconcerned as an experienced driver. She was accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Crapsey. This animal has traveled all over the world with its owner.

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HOW DAN SAVED HIS GOOD NAME

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII.

Dan Brury Makes a Gallant Rescue on the Trip Across the English Channel.

Prendergast's first inquiry was about the morning packet, and he was told that one had sailed for Calais an hour ago.

Then he began a patient work among the cabmen who took passengers to the dock, and at length found a driver who had been hired to take a man and his baggage to the steamer from a hotel where he had passed the night.

"He was a tall, dark man, with a heavy mustache and a long, blackish sort of beard," said the cabman, "and I remember him because I had a double job with him. First I had to take him from the tavern where he'd put up for the night, and then I had to drive him to the station to get his luggage from the express office."

"Not from the luggage office?"

"No, he had no brasses for the luggage; it had been sent down by express from London."

"Did you see the express label?"

"Yes."

"What did it read?"

"Some such name as Strawberry, or Roreberry, or——"

"Stanton Carberry?" put in Dan.

"Yes, that was the name."

"That settles it," said Prendergast, as Dick put a generous tip into the hand of the cabman. "His brother George or somebody else sent his luggage down by express, and he's off with the packet to France with such of the booty as he has not yet pawned. Now that he knows that he is being tracked both by you boys and the Rederton's, he will probably use various disguises from this time on, just as he wore the heavy, blackish sort of beard that the cabman described. Get the office in Paris to help you, and you may land your man."

A few hours later the boys said farewell to Prendergast and went on board the vessel that was to carry them to France.

As the two boys walked aboard the packet, they glanced in a casual way at the passengers who were sitting on the deck or standing watching the friends who were waving farewell to them, and they saw two persons, a man of middle age and a girl who appeared to be about sixteen, sitting in chairs near the companionway.

"What a pretty girl!" said Dick, who always had his eyes open for female beauty.

"Yes, she is," said Dan, and for once in his life he gazed at the girl for a greater length of time than his partner bestowed on her. "In fact, I think she is the prettiest girl I have ever seen."

"Hit at last?" laughingly asked Dick.

"Don't be a fool," said Dan, but he looked again at the girl for all that, and surprised her eyes fixed on him with such frank approval that he blushed to think that a girl should admire him, and the girl blushed because she had been caught at it.

Dick looked slyly at the pair of them and at that moment the middle-aged man looked up and caught sight of the boys.

He glanced at their New York clothing, and then at their faces, and then he got up from his chair and came forward.

"Excuse me, young gentlemen," he said, in a very agreeable manner, "but I am an American, and you certainly look like Americans to me."

"We are," said the boys.

"And something about you makes me think that you come from my home city of New York."

"That's where we come from," said Dick.

"I thought so," said the other, with a very pleased expression on his face. "There is something about New York that seems to put a certain stamp on people, no matter in what part of the world you may run across them. My name is Parmlee, Griswold Parmlee."

"My companion is named Drury," said Dick, "and my name is Dale."

"Pleased to know you both," heartily said Mr. Griswold Parmlee, shaking hands with them both. "I used to do business with Harvey Dale."

"Harvey Dale of New street, banker and broker?" cried Dick.

"That's the man."

"He is my father."

"Well, well," smilingly said Parmlee, "how strangely things do turn out to be sure. I had business dealings with your father for over ten years, for I was in the market for speculation, and he handled my margins for me up to the time that I made a strike in a mining venture that put me beyond the need of doing any further business as long as I live. Since then I have been touring the world in the company of my niece, that young lady sitting over yonder. I'm delighted to meet you boys, for to tell the truth it gets awfully tiresome to have to talk to and associate with foreigners all the time, and my heart just bubbles over with joy when I run across people from little old New York."

He fairly beamed with pleasure.

Meanwhile the girl and Dan had been stealing sly glances at each other, and the latter was well pleased when Parmlee asked them to come along with him and be introduced to his niece.

She really was a very pretty girl, and her dark eyes flashed with pleasure when she was presented to Dan. Dick was favored with a bow, and a polite word when presented, but Dan she looked at in such a way that it made his heart go pit-a-pat. Her name was Henrietta Parmlee, and Dan came to the conclusion that he had never heard a nicer name.

"This is my second trip to Paris," said Parmlee, when they were seated in chairs, "but I really know nobody there, and I shall be pleased if you boys will call on us at the Hotel America."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

A BOOM IN LEECHES

After many years of comparative neglect, the humble leech is again coming into its old popularity. But the old leech farms have long disappeared and modern physicians who claim there are few better methods of relieving inflammatory areas than by the application of these blood-sucking creatures find difficulty in the supply. The "animated mustard plasters" are exported in baskets from Turkey, and Paris has one leech farm selling 130,000 a month, but it is said that chemists in England could easily dispose of double the number they are able to buy.

CAT STOWS AWAY ON AMUNDSEN'S SHIP

A stowaway is aboard Amundsen's ship, the *Maud*, now en route toward the polar regions. In a radio message received at Seattle, Wash., the self-appointed passenger on the seven years' trip amid the Arctic ice pack was discovered by the cook when the *Maud* was eight days out from Puget Sound.

The stowaway is a mottled full grown cat.

Traditionally cats are considered a part of the crew of all sea-going boats, but none was taken on the *Maud* because of the trio of Eskimo dogs belonging to the natives on the ship. The northern dogs consider cats a great delicacy, so when the tabby stowaway wandered on board the *Maud* the dogs at once chased her far into the galley, where the cook found her chewing at a knuckle bone.

Just what Commander Amundsen, who is awaiting the arrival of the *Maud* at Nome, will do with tabby is not certain, but the polar explorers have already adopted her and taught her to climb aloft from the brutality of the dogs. One of the mates says he is training her to climb the North Pole.

The appearance of the cat on board the *Maud* was hailed as an omen of success on the long trip into the uncharted wastes.

WHAT MAKES ANIMALS CHANGE COLOR?

The striking changes of color which have been observed on the bodies of some of the lower animals, such as reptiles (especially the chameleon), fishes and amphibia, including frogs, are brought about by the activity of cells charged with pigment of color-granules and situated in the skin. These startling phenomena, according to the London *Lancet*, which seem to indicate that the animal has the power to adapt the color of its skin to that of its surroundings and disappear at will, are partly under the control of the sympathetic nervous system; but recent work indicates that ductless gland secretions play an important rôle in regulating pigment responses.

Dr. Lancelot Hogben and Mr. F. R. Winton have shown that extracts of the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland have a very characteristic and highly specific effect on the chromatophores of amphibia, inducing black pigment cells to expand and the yellow pigment cells to contract, so that

an intense darkening of the skin results. A frog which half an hour previously was of a pale yellow tint will change after an injection of less than 0.00025 c.cm. of a 20 per cent. extract of pituitary to a coal-black hue, remaining in this condition for several hours. Adrenalin has precisely the reverse effect, inducing pallor in a frog which was previously dark. The melanophore stimulant in pituitary extracts is apparently secreted by the intermediate portion of the gland. Expansion of frog melanophores may be induced by extracts of the pituitary gland of mammals, birds, amphibia and fishes. The reaction may be obtained on the isolated frog's skin, so that its nature is local; and since it is not prevented by paralysis of the nerves which supply the melanophores, it appears that pituitary extracts act directly on the melanophores. Sufficient of the melanophore stimulant can be obtained from the pituitary gland of one frog to induce darkening of the skin in thirty other individuals of the same species. This opposing action of posterior pituitary and adrenalin in the regulation of pigment responses is extremely interesting in connection with human physiology and pathology.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.
 166 West 23d St., New York

My Friend the Tiger

By HORACE APPLETON

Many are the tales told of faithful dogs, horses, cats, and other domestic animals. The following, incredible as it may appear, is, I believe, a true account of the fidelity shown by one of the most ferocious of the feræ naturæ to his master, as told me by a friend, now alas! no more. The friend I allude to was one of the most distinguished of the officers of the late Honorable East India Company. He was well known through the length and breadth of the land as one without fear and reproach. Pre-eminent as a soldier, as a statesman, and as a sportsman, he will never be forgotten as long as the annals of our Eastern Empire are extant. Many are the monuments raised to his memory, but none more enduring than the affectionate regard in which he is held by the Bheels, whom he brought under subjection, not by the vigor of the law, but by personal example and dashing, almost reckless bravery, winning the hearts of the people by his open-handed generosity and strict rectitude of conduct, and unexampled exploits in the chase, in which those primitive people are themselves adepts.

When I was a young man, I was an ardent sportsman, and I have spent many years in the wilds of Hindustan. More than thirty years ago (the story was told very many years ago), I was sent with a detachment of a regiment to Dharwar, as hostilities were expected to break out in the southern Mahratta country. However, no disturbances took place, and I had ample leisure for devoting myself to the wild sports of the country. Under the guidance of Appiah, the most noted shikarie in those parts, I slew most of the game met with in the ghats of the Western Presidency.

One day, as we were returning from a very successful hunt, in passing through a rocky ravine I heard extraordinary noises, and, running forward, came face to face with an immense tiger, who was murdering a youngster of his own species. You know that tigers are given to that pernicious habit, and destroy all their male offspring if they come across them, which, however, is but seldom; for the tigress hides them from their birth and, should they be discovered by their unnatural parent and she be present, will fight to the death in defense of her young. In this instance she was absent, and her lord and master was exterminating her hopefuls as I came on the scene. I was not prepared for such game, for, thinking that my day's sport was over, I had exchanged the rifle for the gun, which was charged with No. 2 shot, with which I hoped to knock over some peafowl for the pot.

However, on the impulse of the moment, I fired into his face right and left, and, springing back, seized the rifle, expecting fully that the tiger would be upon me. It was a dull, oppressive day, and the smoke from my barrels hung very much. When it cleared away, my antagonist had disappeared, leaving plenty of blood on his trail as a proof that he had not got off scot-free.

My first care was to pick up the poor little feline which he had dropped, and which could not have been more than a month old, and my second to beat a hasty retreat, for I wanted to get clear away before the return of the tigress. I noticed two other youngsters lying dead; and the sight of these, together with the loss of the third would, I knew, render her desperate, and the place we were in was not the best adapted for such an encounter, especially as it was getting dark.

I hurried to my camp, distant a couple of miles, and had my captive carefully attended to, and its wounds washed and dressed. I had a Brinjaree bitch—a savage, unreliable brute, with four pups somewhat older than the little tiger. Whilst she was being fed outside, I removed one of her pups, and sent it to the village to a foster-mother, substituting the tiger in its place, and waited anxiously for the result, fully expecting to see the dog worry it at once. It was somewhat dark when the bitch returned to her litter, and pups and tiger were rolled up together, one of the former lying on the top of the latter. The bitch merely poked the little ones with her nose, and, lying down, all the four were soon sucking away most amicably.

As he grew older, his diet consisted of bread and milk, supplemented hereafter by a mess of cooked meat and rice; but he always seemed to prefer the former, certainly up to the age of six months, by which time he was as large as a full-grown leopard. He followed me about like a dog. Even when mounted, he would go with me miles and miles, and he and my Arab stallion became excellent friends.

About this time I was appointed to officiate as a political officer, in addition to my military duties; and I received much kudos from the government for putting down dakoity. I incurred the enmity of all the bad characters, who combined together to get rid of me. The crusade against thugs had, in those days, been only partially successful, and gangs still infested the country. As a rule, these murdering robbers seldom interfered with European officers; first, because these seldom kept many valuables by them; and secondly, because the murder or disappearance of one would create too great a disturbance. I had been urged by my spies to place guards at night over my house, but I had neglected to do so; and, as the weather was sultry, I slept, as is usual in the East, with all my doors and windows open. My only valuables, rifles and guns, were secured by a chain which passed through the trigger-guards, fastened by a padlock to one of the legs of my bed.

One dark pitchy night, after a heavy day's walk, chasing a gang of well-known dakoits, in which I had been unsuccessful, I had gone to bed very tired, and slept, I have no doubt, unusually heavily. I was awakened by a roar and a heavy fall, and, jumping up, I lit a candle, and seizing the nearest weapon, which proved to be a hog-spear, I rushed towards the tumult and found my pet worrying a man, who proved to be a most noted thug. He was in his full war paint, if I may call it so, for he had not a stitch of clothing on him, and was well oiled instead. This is the usual custom amongst Indian robbers when on

any hazardous expedition, for then, if tackled by their victim, they slip through his hands and escape; but with his strange antagonist the thug had not a chance. Selim, as I had christened the tiger, had dug his claws well into the man's shoulder, and was worrying him and shaking him as a terrier would a rat and doubtless would have made an end of him in a few minutes had I not interfered. My servants, who were asleep in the veranda, hearing the hub-bub, crowded into the room, and soon seized and pinioned the thief, the leader of a notorious gang. On promising to spare his life, he gave information which led to the capture of all his comrades. He confessed it had been his intention to rob and kill me. So I owed my life to my strange protege.

Two months afterwards I received orders to return to Poona with my detachment, and I shall never forget the excitement nor the crowds which collected to see me riding at the head of my men, followed by a good-sized tiger, totally uncontrolled in any way. Selim was certainly too big to be left at large; but he was an exceptional beast. I had full confidence in him, and his only badge of servitude was a broad silver collar, on which were engraved his name and his service to me.

The brigadier of the station, a fussy, old, timorous gentleman, hearing I had a loose tiger on my premises, sent me a peremptory order either to destroy him or to keep him confined. Now I knew if I put him in an ordinary cage, Selim would fret himself to death; so I had one room of my bungalow fitted up purposely for him, the doors and windows being fitted with bars, but I spent a good deal of my time with him, and even slept in the same room. As he got bigger he slept on a rug, stretched full length alongside of my cot, and never attempted to go on to it as of yore. He was very cleanly in his habits, like most of the cat tribe, and had a yard surrounded by a high wall to retire to when he wished. He was seldom happy in my absence, and he soon became a general pet and favorite with my brother officers, and he was as friendly with them as with me. I taught him many tricks, and never had occasion to speak an angry word to him. But he missed his exercise, and was pining for fresh air; so often, when all the station was fast asleep, I took my pet out for a run. Sometimes I was on foot, sometimes on horseback; and either way he equally enjoyed himself, gamboling like a kitten around me. Nearly two years elapsed, and Selim was a fine, sleek, nearly full-grown beast. I was then permanently transferred to the political department, and returned to Dhwar in a civil capacity; and, of course, Selim accompanied me. Being my own master, I no longer put any restraint on the movements of my tiger; he wandered about as he pleased, either in the compound or in the house. He never went beyond bounds unless he accompanied me. His diet still consisted of milk and bread, and occasionally of cooked meat. He never tasted raw meat as far as I know, in his life.

About this time a tiger became the scourge of the country, killing people right and left. He was a most knowing brute; he would never return to a kill, so sitting up for him was useless. He would be in a place one day, and be heard of fully twenty miles off the next. So a reward of

five hundred rupees was offered for his skin. I went after him repeatedly, but for several months I searched for him in vain. At last, despairing of ever coming across him, I gave him up, and as he had not killed any one for some months past in my neighborhood I forgot his very existence.

Tracking up a wounded stag, I found myself at the very spot where I had saved Selim's life three years before. Appiah was some distance ahead, closely followed by my strange companion. I had loitered behind, and was stooping down to pick up a cheroot I had dropped, when there was a roar. Something sprang at me across a boulder, but I threw myself down so suddenly that the blow aimed at me took only partial effect, knocking my helmet off. I was unhurt, but prostrate, with a brindled mass over me. My rifle had fallen some distance off. Before the brute could seize me there was another roar, and Selim sprang on to my foe, knocking him over and rolling on to him. In less time than it takes to tell, the two were engaged in deadly combat. Selim had youth and activity on his side, his adversary weight and size.

I scrambled to my feet and seized my rifle, but both hammers were broken off and it was useless. Appiah had but a shotgun, which he quickly handed to me; but before I could use it Selim had thrown his antagonist on his back and fastened on his throat. The usually quiet brute was transformed into a fiend incarnate. A brief struggle, and a gurgling sound, and sundry gasps proclaimed the approaching dissolution of the larger brute, who, however, with an expiring, desperate effort, got his hind legs and claws on to Selim's stomach, and with one tremendous kick ripped him open.

Even then, though he had received his death blow, Selim never let go his hold until the breath was out of his enemy; then sank down alongside, and with fast glazing eyes looked imploringly at me. I shouted to Appiah to bring some water, and, rushing to my preserver, I put my arm around his neck and poured some water down his throat. This revived him somewhat. Looking at me most affectionately, and licking my hands which held the water-bottle to his lips, he gave a few sobs, a spasm or two passed over his frame, and his faithful spirit fled.

I need not attempt to express my grief at the catastrophe. My faithful Selim had saved my life a second time by sacrificing his own. He was, indeed, "faithful unto death." On examining the brute who had attacked me it was ascertained beyond doubt that he was the dreaded man-eater; and it was also surmised, by a number of large shots which were discovered imbedded under the skin of his head and neck, and by which he had been deprived of the use of one eye, that he was the identical tiger from whose fangs I had saved my faithful Selim.

"Bub, did you find a quarter here?" he asked of a little chap leaning against a lamp-post at the post-office corner. "Naw! did you drop one?" "I think I did." "Well, you orter know I didn't find it. If I had, I'd have been a mile off by this time. Us boys never take chances of the owner coming back."

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, AUGUST 2, 1922

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

CATERPILLARS EAT FORESTS

Caterpillars have eaten fifty square miles of forests in the Kipling district near Regina, Sask.

Scarcely a green leaf remains and the district presents the stark appearance of a Winter scene, forestry officials say.

NEEDLE IN BABY'S BACK

A needle two inches long was taken from the back of the year-old baby girl of Mr. and Mrs. Montford Dixon of Paintsville, Ky., by its mother. The baby had been in delicate health for some time, and what was thought to be a boil appeared on its back and a physician was called. The next day while the mother was dressing the wound she found the needle.

LIQUOR AND VOTES IN OLD POMPEII

The saloon was known in ancient Pompeii, as recent excavations disclose. A bar has been found, with a furnace and caldron for making the brew; there was even a little liquor left in the caldron. Election appeals were found on the walls; Lollius, a duumvir who looked after streets and sacred buildings, asks the votes of the frequenters of the saloon. This method of seeking votes antedates 200 B. C.

BOTTLES TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Bottling up a telephone message until the person rung up has returned to the office or house has become a possibility by the combination of an invention of Poulsen, the famous wireless telephone pioneer, and a wireless valve, says a London newspaper.

If a telephone call is made and the person wanted is not available a simple recording instrument can be set in motion and a message dictated that can be repeated at any time later.

The Poulsen telegraphone, invented many years ago, is a device in which a telephone message can be impressed upon a moving steel ribbon by means of magnetic action. When the ribbon has run through a simple reproducing device it repeats the message, but so feebly that the invention was abandoned.

An instrument has now been constructed by a man named A. Nasarischwily with which the reproduced sound can be amplified to any degree of loudness by the use of one of the valves now employed universally in wireless reception. The steel wire or ribbon, with its magnetic message, can be removed from the instrument and sent by post and the message reproduced in any other instrument, and permanent records can be made of speeches and so on.

The inventor claims that a message or signal may be spoken from a train into a railway line and received by the driver of the train following.

LAUGHS

Husband—What makes you think that I've been drinking? Wife—Lots of things. Chiefly because you're so awfully tipsy.

"Wot do they mean, Jimmy, when they say money talks?" "I dunno, unless it's the wonderful way it says good-by to yer."

The Doctor—I had a great many more patients this time last year; wonder where they have gone? His Wife—We can only hope for the best, dear.

"None but brave," she sang, "deserve the fair." The grizzled bachelor bit his lip. "And none but the brave," he appended, "can live with some of 'em."

Alan (in clear and bell-like tones, five minutes after the curtain has gone up on the first scene of "The Merchant of Venice")—Mother, which is Shakespeare?

Employer—My boy, I've had my nose to the grindstone for over forty years! Office Boy—My word, sir, it must have been a daisy at the start.

Customer—You don't seem very quick at figures, my boy. Newsboy—I'm out o' practice. Ye see, most o' de gents says, "Keep de change."

Seaside Visitor—What was the cause of that boating accident the other day? Boatman—Too full. Seaside Visitor—The boat too full? Boatman (with a husky cough)—No, the fellows in it.

The Builder (to the new foreman)—Well, Tim, getting on all right? Where are all the hands? The Foreman—Sure, I've sacked 'em all, to show 'em who's foreman now.

A horse dealer was trying to sell a horse afflicted with heaves, and said to the prospective buyer: "Hasn't he a fine coat? Isn't it a dandy?" "His coat's all right, but I don't like his pants."

"What's the reason your boy doesn't like to work on a farm? He's fond of outdoor exercise." "I'm workin' on that problem now," answered Farmer Corntossel. "If these uplift experts could make arrangements to have plowin' records printed in the sportin' news, I think Josh could be persuaded to take an interest."

FROM ALL POINTS

BEAR WHIPPED COW

Following a battle that lasted for half an hour between a black bear that weighed 350 pounds and a cow in pasture, on North Mountain, near Bloomsburgh, Pa., in which the bear came off victorious, William Temple succeeded in killing the bear. He reported the circumstance to the game warden and was absolved from blame.

BOY PLAYING INDIAN, BURIED ALIVE

Chester J. Rhein, 13, son and only child of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rhein of 10 Ruth street, Irvington, N. J., was buried alive the other day while playing Indian back of the summer home of his parents at Monmouth avenue and Cedar street, Ocean View.

He had dug a hole about five feet deep and started to undermine it, when the wet shore sand caved in on him and he was trapped before he could cry out. When the lad failed to respond to calls from his mother a search was begun. The father saw the lad's heel protruding through the sand, and he dug furiously until he released the body.

The lad was rushed to a physician's office, where efforts were made to revive him.

It is believed he was dead when extricated by his father.

DEATH VALLEY IS THE HOTTEST PLACE

Ten years of records obtained at the United States Weather Bureau's sub-station at Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, Cal., indicate that this is the hottest region in the United States, and, so far as extreme maximum temperatures are concerned, the hottest region on earth, says *The Scientific American*.

The temperature of 134 degrees F., recorded on July 10, 1913, is believed by meteorologists to be the highest natural air temperature ever recorded with a tested standard thermometer exposed in the shade under approved conditions. High temperatures are common throughout the year, but the highest occur during midsummer.

Precipitation is extremely light, the normal annual precipitation being less than two inches. Evaporation is excessive, as the relative humidity is extremely low most of the time, and especially during the hot spells of summer. White people find the midsummer heat most trying; even the Indians go up to the Panamint Range during July and August. The weather station maintained at Greenland Ranch in co-operation with the borax company is unique in many ways.

CANADIAN BUFFALO HERD TOTALS 6,146

The great Canadian herd of buffalo at Buffalo Park, Wainwright, Alberta, has increased to 6,146 head, according to the official count made by Superintendent A. G. Smith as the animals were being turned out of their winter quarters in the

160 square miles of range. The report, which was made to the Commissioner of Canadian National Parks, shows that the natural increase for the year was 1,075, while the decrease due to fighting, old age and animals slaughtered was 81, giving a net increase of 994.

Close to 1,100 of the animals remained in the main park during the winter months and came through in splendid condition, while 4,962 were in winter quarters. The remainder of the herd was taken care of in the home paddock and cattle enclosures.

Thirteen years ago the nucleus of this great herd, numbering approximately 700, was purchased from Michael Pablo of Montana and the buffalo have grown in this period to eight and a half their original number. To-day Canada possesses three-fifths of the American bison in the world, with an estimated valuation of nearly \$2,000,000. The disposal of a number of the males, which exceed herd purposes by about 1,000 head, is engaging the attention of the Park Department.

HERE AND THERE.

One day last fall W. A. Duffy, of Humboldt, Tenn., drove to his farm near town, and, having some business to attend to on the place, took the horse loose from the shafts and hitched him to the wheel of the buggy. Mr. Duffy left his coat in the buggy, and on his return he found the animal had just finished eating the last of a package of notes aggregating \$1,076.

A strange freak was found in Vineland Haven harbor by a young woman, who was in bathing. She saw a bottle on the bottom and dived for it. When it was brought to the surface it was found to contain a live lobster far too large to have crawled through the neck of the bottle. It is supposed that it got into the trap when it was a little fellow, and was unable to find its way out, but how it got food enough to grow on is a mystery.

In China liquids are sold by weight and grain by measure. John buys soup by the pound and cloth by the foot. A Chinaman never puts his name outside his shop, but paints instead a motto or a list of his goods on his vertical sign-board. Some reassuring remark is frequently added, such as "One word hall," "A child two feet high would not be cheated." Every single article has to be bargained for, and it is usual for the customer to take his own measure and scales with him.

In Uganda a man can buy a handsome wife for four bulls, a box of cartridges, and six needles, and if he has the luck to go a-wooing when women happen to be a drug in the market he can buy a suitable damsel for a pair of shoes. A Kaffir girl is worth, according to the rank of her family, from four to ten cows; and in Tartary no father will surrender his daughter unless he gets a good quantity of butter in return, and in certain parts of India no girl can marry unless her father has been pacified by a present of rice and a few rupees.

PLUCK AND LUCK

GOOD READING

AWOKE IN THE AIR

J. D. Stewart, Haynesville, La., member of a drill crew in the oil field, while asleep near a boiler suddenly awoke to find himself sailing over the tree tops astride the exploded boiler. He landed in a tree 165 feet away, with one leg broken and several scalp wounds. Dan Kelly, fireman, was injured painfully.

CROTON DAM CATARACT IS HEARD FIVE MILES

Employees of the New York city waterworks reported an overflow of almost thirteen inches in depth recently over the spillway of the Cornell dam of the Croton reservoir, which exceeds all records there since the dam was completed sixteen years ago. The roar of the tremendous rush of water falling 150 feet, could be heard five miles.

About 2,900,000,000 gallons of water tumbled to waste down the spillway, which is about 1,250 feet wide, and made the mightiest cataract ever seen at Croton. Figured at wholesale rates charged in New York for water, the thirteen-inch overflow meant a loss in twenty-four hours of water worth \$390,000.

RED AND GREEN UNITE TO AVERT SUN-STROKE

The fact that a combination of red and green materials was used in the uniforms of the 'Tommies during the war to nullify the effect of the rays of the sun was brought out in a claim before the Royal Commission of Awards when J. N. Thomson applied for an award on behalf of his deceased father.

It was stated that a weave of these two colors sewn into the soldier's spine pad, which was four inches wide and fixed into the tunic proved highly effective in Mesopotamia, where 7,000 men were thus equipped. The same combination was used as a sun curtain hung from the helmet, protecting the back of the neck, and is generally employed now in the army to prevent sunstroke. Thomson claimed that not a single case of sunstroke was known where the protective material was worn.

STRANGE ELECTRIC STORM

On a February night, in south latitude 33 degrees west longitude 38 degrees, the sailing ship Ville de Havre encountered a most remarkable storm. The rain fell in torrents and the ship appeared to be electrified, the mastheads flaming like giant candles. Strange lights traveled over the rigging and after every flash of lightning a part of the vessel, which had been newly painted, remained for several seconds glowing with phosphorescence.

The lightning, which was very frequent, instead of displaying itself in zigzag lines took the form of flying bombs, which exploded with outbursts of light that illuminated the whole sky. Before and after the more violent explosions of

thunder fierce gusts of wind swept the ship. This terrifying experience lasted for five hours with no respite.

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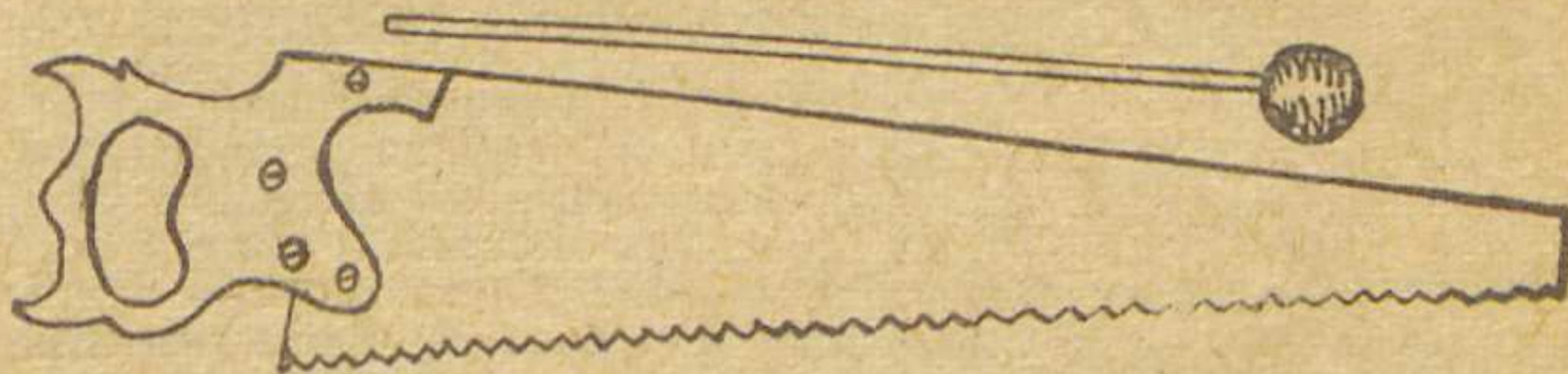
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DOG FIGHTS HOGS

Several brood sows weighing from 600 to 700 pounds each, locked in a hog house, attacked J. Franzen, a farmer who resides north of Randolph, Neb., one morning, downed him, almost scalped him, tore his jaws and mangled his face, it was learned here. Hearing his master's agonized shrieks a Scotch collie jumped over several fences and through a partially opened window of the hog house and saved Franzen's life.

Franzen went to the hog house to look after the swine. While he was leaning over one of the big sows rushed at him, knocking him down and then started tearing at his face. Other hogs joined in the attack and Franzen was powerless. One hog tore open his scalp and another gashed his face in a horrible manner. His chin and jaws were torn and he cried out with pain.

Suddenly the collie jumped through the window and attacked the enraged animals, biting them and rushing between his master and attacking the hogs.

With the aid of the dog Franzen managed to crawl from the hog house to safety.

VENTRILOQUISM

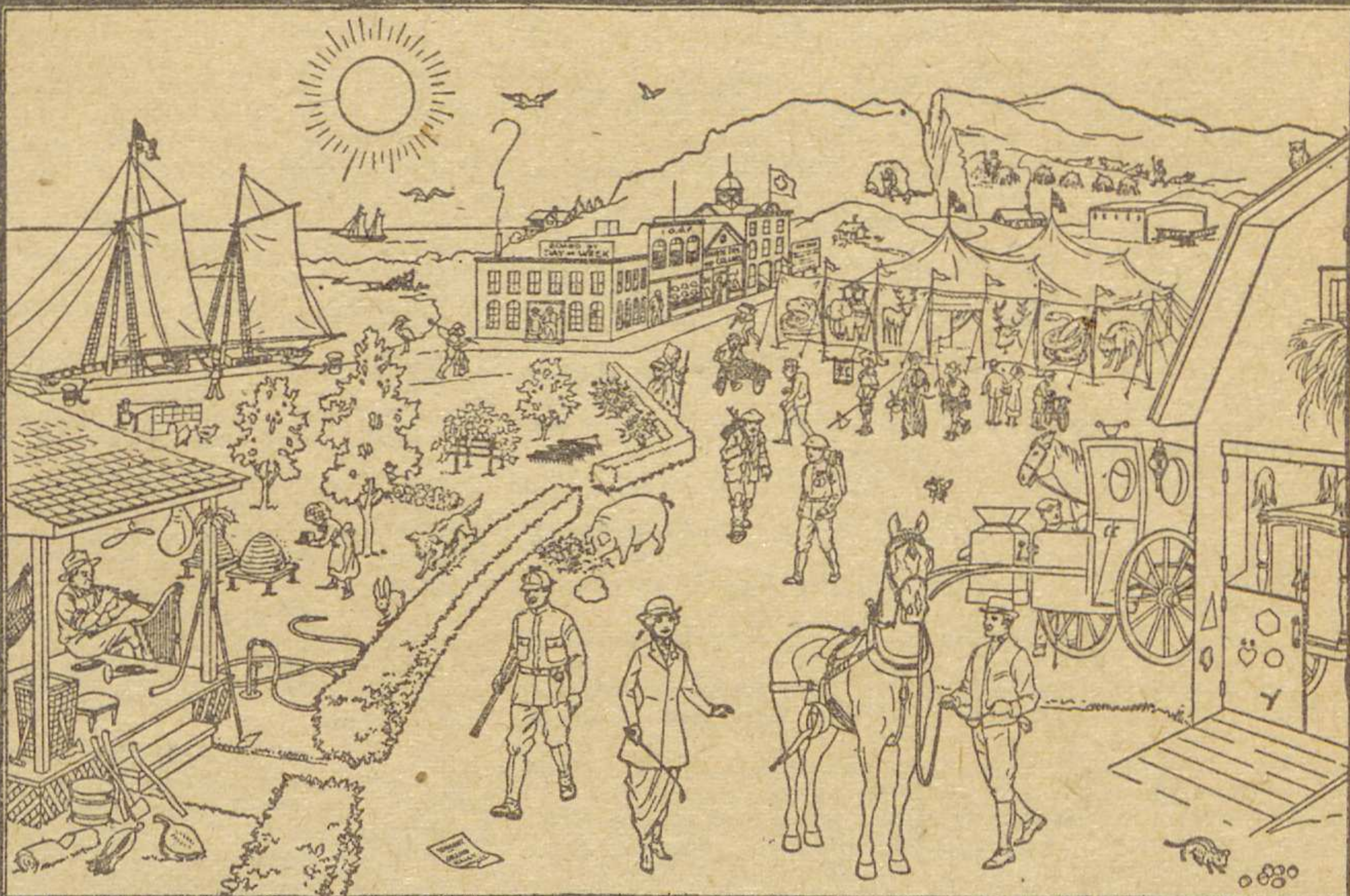
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1st Prize	\$40	\$200	\$400	\$1500
2nd Prize	20	100	200	750
3rd Prize	20	50	100	375
4th Prize	20	35	65	175
5th Prize	10	25	40	100
6th to 15th Prizes—each	1	2	5	10

Read These Rules:

1. Any person living in America (outside of Chicago, Ill.), except employees of Home Folks Magazine or their relatives, may submit an answer. There is no entrance fee.

2. The answer having the largest number of words which correctly name objects beginning with the letter "H" will win first prize, and so on down the list of 15 prizes. The winning list will be made up from the words submitted by the contestants, and not controlled by any predetermined list of words selected by the judges as being the correct or "master" list. In case of ties for any prizes offered, full amount of the prize tied for will be awarded each tying contestant.

3. Use only English words. Words of the same spelling but different meaning, and synonymous words will count only once. Either the singular or plural may be named, but not both. An object may be named only once, but its parts may also be named. Answers must not include hyphenated, compound or obsolete words, or words not applicable to objects shown in the picture. For each word that is incorrect, a percentage

will be deducted from the total number of correct words. Webster's International Dictionary will be final authority.

4. Write your list of words on one side of the paper only. Number words consecutively—1, 2, 3, 4, etc. An enlarged picture will be furnished free on request.

5. Three judges independent of and having no connection with "Home Folks" Magazine will make the decisions and award the prizes. Their decisions must be accepted as final and conclusive. Prize winners will be notified immediately after the judges have made their decision, and names of the winners and winning list of words will be published in "Home Folks" as soon as possible after the close of the contest.

6. Two or more people may co-operate in answering the puzzle. However, only one prize will be given to any household or group.

7. All word lists must be received not later than office closing time, September 20, 1922, but subscriptions to Home Folks Magazine sent to qualify lists for the prizes will be accepted if received up to office closing time Oct. 7th.

The Horse wears a Harness. On the woman in the foreground there is Hat, Head, Hand. That's five words to start on. How many more can you find? Write down the "H" words as you find them. See how easy it is. Nothing is hidden. You can win \$1,500.

Open to Everybody!

It doesn't cost one cent to enter this contest or to win a prize. If you send no subscription to "Home Folks" and your list is the largest which correctly names the "H" objects in the picture, you will be awarded first prize of \$40.

How to Win the \$1500

Remember, you do not need to send in any subscriptions in order to win a cash prize. But if you send in \$1 for one 5-year subscription and the judges decide your list is best, you win \$200 instead of \$40. If you send in \$2 for two 5-year subscriptions, and are awarded first prize, you get \$400. But if you send us \$5 for five 5-year subscriptions, and win first prize, you get \$1500; for the second best list you would get \$750; for third best list \$375, etc., as shown in Class D prize column. Win all you can.

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